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ABSTRACT

Based on the study "Migrant Children in Florida", this paper discusses the Spanish speaking farm workers who migrate to Dade County yearly to harvest the tomato and fresh vegetable crops. During the fall of 1969 and the spring of 1970, questionnaires were given to a random sample of 9,065 adult migrant workers in Florida counties with significant migrant activity. In Dade County, 643 Spanish speaking workers were interviewed along with supervisors and officials of state and local agricultural and migrant agencies. This paper divides the general agricultural scene in Dade County into 3 groups: (1) migrant workers, (2) growers and farmers, and (3) supervisors or intermediaties between the growers and migrant workers. Some differences between Puerto Rican and Mexican American migrants are pointed out and analyzed. An overall picture of local agriculture from the growers' and farmers' viewpoint is given. Major ideas are (1) Puerto Rican migrants are numerically fading from south Dade's agricultural scene and (2) patron-client relationships are markedly absent among migrant workers and work supervisors. (NQ)

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Cultural and Economic Mediation Among Spanish Speaking Migrant Farm Workers in Dade County, Florida

by

Lucian Edward Ferster

A THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty
of the University of Miami
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

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Cultural and Economic Mediation Among Spanish Speaking Migrant Farm Workers in Dade County, Florida

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Dedicado a los
pueblos bravos de
Borinquen y Aztlán.

My father's own father, he waded that river,
He took all the money he made in his life
My brothers and sisters came working the fruit trees.
And they rode the truck till they took down and died.

-Woody Guthrie
"Song of the Deportees"

In ceremonies of the horsemen,
Even the pawn must hold a grudge.
Statues made of matchsticks
Crumble into one another.

-Bob Dylan
"Outlaw Blues"

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PREFACE

The following study is an attempt to portray and understand some aspects of human behavior. This is a presumptuous task which has never been satisfactorily performed even though it has been repeatedly attempted by philosophers, social scientists, and poets. In this case the scope of the human behavior to be studied has been limited in terms of geography, culture, and occupational activity; this limitation has made the task a little less presumptuous, but probably has made it no less impossible.

So complex a being is man, and so much more so when considered in groups, that the many methods and insights given us by psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, economists, and political scientists are all pitifully inadequate when applied to portraying and understanding human behavior. It could be maintained that the behavioral sciences have made great steps forward within the past few decades; this is probably true, but man, even though he has walked upon the moon, still exists in a global society which is largely characterized by war, mutual exploitation, mass starvation, alienation, and a grey hopelessness. Thus to give much credence to the advanced methods and insights of the social sciences as a means of modifying, understanding, or even portraying human behavior, is but to deceive oneself and to remove one's thinking from the realities of human existence.

Therefore, even though this study has drawn heavily upon the thinking of social scientists, anthropologists in particular, this writer is unable to commence with the usual list of acknowledgements to those shining lights of the social sciences whose thoughts have been used (and in reality, appreciated) in the following pages.

However, the writer would like to express his gratitude to Professors H.W. Hutchinson, E. John Kleinert, and David Cartano who have all kindly stimulated and guided my research; my wife, Kyle, who has humored and cheered me; my dog, Jake, who has been a faithful companion as I have written this report; and to Mr. Oscar Moreno, who has fed me some of south Dade's best tortillas.

Most of all, this writer is grateful to the Mexican-American and Puerto Rican farm workers who have provided their information, commentaries, insights, and companionship in the process of making this study. It is for migrant workers that this study has been done, but it is painfully realized that once again the researcher has gained much more than the researched. Once again the interviewer, be he working in the interests of government programs, reporting the news, or furthering the advances of social science, has come away with greater benefits than the interviewed. When this process involves a people as colonized and exploited as migrant workers, we witness and are a part of, the least honest and most tragic of all forms of exploitation.

INTRODUCTION

The major concern of this study is the Spanish speaking farm workers who migrate to Dade County each year in order to harvest the tomato and fresh vegetable crops. These migrants, both Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans from south Texas, arrive here in November or December and stay through the end of the harvesting season in May. Those migrants who harvest south Dade's crops belong to several ethnic groups; about a third of them are American Negroes, more than ten percent are American Whites, and more than half of the county's migrants are Spanish speaking peoples--either Puerto Ricans or Mexican-Americans from the southern part of Texas.

All migrants--Black, Spanish speaking, and White--arrive, live here, and depart in obscurity; their existence, and their poverty, is easily forgotten in the same county which is touted as the "Sun and Fun Capital of the East." The lot of migrant farm workers is well documented as being one of the most poverty stricken and desperate of all occupational groups. The degree of this poverty, which must be seen to be appreciated, is a lamentable and outrageous fact which has made the writing of this report a painful balancing act between muckraking and the bloodless approach of "scientific" investigation.

The following investigation will attempt to portray and analyze Dade County's Spanish speaking migrants by the use of two methods. First of all, the general agricultural scene in Dade County has been divided into three distinct interest groups. Chapter One presents an overall picture of local agriculture, but this is done from the point of view of the agricultural establishment--the growers and farmers who must deal

with problems such as climate, soil conditions, and the state of the national fresh vegetable market. Chapter Two is a general presentation of Puerto Rican and Mexican-American migrant workers; they are counted, described, and their problems as a disadvantaged group are pointed out. Chapter Three is an attempt to establish a typology, and hence describe, those individuals who supervise migrant workers and at the same time act as representatives or intermediaries between growers and migrant workers.

Secondly, two anthropological concepts are used to analyze some of the social relationships in which migrant farm workers are involved. The first of these concepts, the culture broker, is brought to bear in the analysis of how and why certain individuals act to relate the greatly differing cultures and economic interests of local agricultural management and labor. The second concept, the patron-client relationship, is applied to the Dade County situation to see if and how high and low status members of the agricultural community form symbiotic relationships with one another for their mutual benefits.

This writer was initially involved with Spanish speaking migrant workers in January of 1969 while working as a research assistant for the Florida Migratory Child Survey which was conducted by the University of Miami. In the summer of the same year, this writer spent six weeks in the lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas doing further research for the Florida Migratory Child Survey. The final written product of this year-long survey, Migrant Children in Florida, edited and largely written by Professor E. John Kleinert, is frequently cited in this paper. In fact, the Kleinert study has served as a basis and as a jumping off point for this present study. It is hoped that this writer's findings will advance and refine some of the Migrant Children in Florida findings. In particular, where the Kleinert study has lumped Puerto Rican and Mexican-American

migrants under the general rubric of "Spanish-Americans," this study will attempt to point out and analyze some of the many differences between these two ethnic groups.

Research for this study was begun in the fall of 1969 at the beginning of the tomato season, and was ended in the spring of 1970 as the last tomatoes and vegetables were harvested. The research methodology of this study has been pragmatic and non-metric in nature. Extensive interviewing of Spanish speaking migrant workers and work supervisors was carried out during most of the 1969-1970 tomato season. As a general understanding was gained, interviewing became less extensive and more intensive as certain helpful and insighiful individuals were selected as key informants. Likewise, several officials of state and local agricultural and migrant oriented agencies were interviewed.

Two of this study's findings came somewhat as a surprise. First, it was unexpected to find that Puerto Rican migrants are numerically fading from south Dade's agricultural scene. At present Puerto Ricans compose an almost insignificant percentage of the overall labor force. Secondly, as the concept of patron-client relationships was intended to be utilized as one of this study's major investigative tools, it came as no small surprise to realize that patron-client relationships are markedly absent among migrant workers and work supervisors. The reasons for this are discussed at the close of Chapter Five.

The epilogue to this study calls for some comment. It was not within the capabilities of this writer to study and analyse migrant workers in an entirely cold and detached manner. Hence those observations which were strongly tainted with personal opinions were, for the most part, reserved for the epilogue. It is the writer's opinion that realizing the conditions under which migrants live and work, the appelations "disadvantaged" or "poverty stricken" are only partial truths and are generally

misleading. Migrant farm workers are an exploited and colonized people whose pitifully low wages, whose miserable living conditions, and whose general exemption from health, education, and welfare services, serve as savings, and hence genuine subsidies, to farmers, produce dealers, grocery markets, and consumers. The existence of the present conditions which characterize migrant life is an immoral state of affairs, if morality may be called upon, and the long term toleration of these conditions can only be explained by the fact that it is profitable for them to exist.

It is too simple a matter to lay the blame squarely on the shoulders of farm owners, although many do this. Even though farmers profit from this system of organized exploitation, they too are exploited by the vegetable brokers and food stores. South Dade farmers are rarely among the very rich, yet conversely, none of them live in tarpaper shacks. The finger of blame for the general conditions of migrant existence cannot be pointed at any single person, interest group, or social condition such as the lack of education; the blame for the existence of migrant conditions lies within the very roots of the American social and economic systems.

Chapter I

DADE COUNTY AGRICULTURE: AN OVERVIEW

THERE'S MORE AT THE MONTMARTRE. . . more of what makes a vacation great. More for every minute, every day: Gala Go-Round nightclub shows, sun/fun and a nonstop whirl of planned daily activities and nightly entertainment. Plus fantastic food. . . and a Dine-Around that treats you to 7 ocean front hotels' cuisine. Counselor supervised playground . . .

-Advertisement, New York Times, Travel Section, 2 November 1969

This tomato goes to market five days sooner. Homestead Elite matures about five days earlier, --a significant advantage for the shipping market. . . . Has good tolerance to cold and is highly resistant to Fusarium wilt. Get Homestead Elite!

-Advertisement, South Florida Grower and Rancher, 6 November 1969

Dade County is famed as the sunshine and vacation capital of the eastern United States. Here beaches, palm trees, flamingos, glittering Miami Beach, Jackie Gleason, and even the nation's president are to be found basking under the sun that Henry Flagler discovered. Five million tourists each year leave leaden skies and frozen birdbaths behind in Scarsdale, Kalamazoo, or Hackensack in order to thaw themselves in Miami's tropical breezes. In the pursuit of warmth, relaxation, and a suntan, the rich and not-so-rich spend somewhere around $500 million each year in Dade County's hotels, restaurants, and "tourist attractions."[1]

As glamourous and lucrative as tourism is, it is an easily forgotten fact that Dade County is also an agricultural area; in fact it is the 60th largest agricultural income producing country in the United States.

"Florida begins 25 miles from downtown Miami."

-Advertisement, Hertz Rent-a-Car

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[1]Center for Advanced International Studies, University of Miami, Psycho-Social Dynamics in Miami, prepared for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (Miami: photostatic reproduction, 1969), p.27.

Florida is an agricultural state, the nation's sixth greatest crop producing state, in terms of cash receipts.[2] In the entire state, income from agriculture exceeds both the income from tourism and from all manufacturing. Perhaps nowhere in Florida is the contrast so strong as between the glamorous tourist hotels and everyday dirt farming as it is in Dade County. It's a long way from Collins Avenue to Krome Avenue, further still from the Montmartre to South Dade Farm Labor Camp No. 1.

Other than the Miami area and the Everglades National Park, Dade County is extremely agricultural. In a heavily agricultural state, it ranks fourth in the value of its farm products, and it leads the state in the production of pole beans, tomatoes, mangos, and limes. This study is specifically concerned with the raising and harvesting of the county's fresh vegetables, particularly tomatoes. It is then of some value to examine the overall and relative importance of tomato production in Dade County.

The state of Florida is the second largest tomato growing state in the Union. For example, in 1964 it produced $73 million in cash receipts for tomatoes; this was exceeded only by California which sold $196 million worth of tomatoes.[3] Dade County is the largest single tomato growing county in the state, for it annually produces about one-third of Florida's tomatoes. In fact, the county ranks fourth among all of the counties in the nation in fresh tomato production, and sixth in the value of all vegetables.[4]

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[2]Bureau of Economic and Business Research, College of Business Administration, University of Florida, Florida Statistical Abstracts, 1969 (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1969), p. 265.

[3]Ibid., p. 266.

[4]Dade County Agricultural Agent's Office, "Dade County Agriculture," pamphlet, 1968.

During the crop year 1967-1968 (fall through spring), Dade County produced $62,647,000 worth of agricultural products.[5] This includes vegetables, fruit, dairy products, poultry, livestock and so forth. Of this total county agricultural income, $44,455,000 was earned in vegetable crops, and of this, $24,090,000 was income from the tomato crop.

TABLE I

Dade County Vegetable Crops: Acreage & Production Value
1967-1968 Crop Year

Vegetables	Acres Planted	Total Production	Cash Value
Tomatoes--Fresh		5,475,000 crt.	$24,090,000
Processed	17,850	1,294,000 crt.	828,000
Potatoes	7,650	1,458,000 cwt.	5,686,000
Pole Beans	5,820	1,586,000 bu.	5,874,000
Squash	2,950	478,000 bu.	2,060,000
Bush Beans	2,550	260,000 bu.	766,000
Strawberries	520	462,000 flats	1,358,000
Sweet Corn	1,756	864,000 crt.	864,000
Cucumbers	1,030	128,000 bu.	435,000
Cabbage	300	105,000 crt.	184,000
Okra	325	90,000 bu.	180,000
Peas	700	87,000 bu.	348,000
Cuban Vegetables	1,410		1,412,000
Other Vegetables	445		370,000
TOTAL	43,306		$44,455,000

Table from Dade County Agricultural Agent's Office, "Dade County Agriculture," pamphlet, 1969.

The preceding table makes clear the fact that tomatoes are overwhelmingly Dade County's most important and lucrative crop. In terms of cash values, tomatoes accounted for 54% of all vegetable returns and nearly 40% of all agricultural returns in the county during the 1967-1968 season.

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[5]Dade County Agricultural Agent's Office, "Dade County Agriculture," pamphlet, 1969.

Dade County's migrant farm workers, their life styles, their incomes, and their futures are tied to the overall county-wide, national, and even international agricultural situation. Or as local farm owners and growers like to phrase it, "What's good for local agriculture is good for the migrants." This statement may or may not be true, but what is important is the fact that no real understanding of migrant workers may be reached until one is at least aware of the overall agricultural picture which strongly affects Dade County growers and farm workers alike. Hence, let us briefly investigate the county's agricultural systems, the "tomato industry" in particular.

Dade County, according to the University of Florida Agricultural Extension Service, "enjoys the most tropical conditions to be found on the mainland of the United States. It is ideally located for the production of tropical fruits, many exotic plants, and especially winter vegetables for northern markets."[6] Hence by grace of the fact that South Florida has no winter to speak of, it has been a profitable venture to produce fresh table vegetables for snowbound Canadian and American markets.

Other than this favorable climatic variance, it could by no means be said that Dade County is an ideal area for the raising fresh vegetables. First of all, the majority of the county's surface area is unsuitable for agriculture; more than two-thirds of the county's area is "water, water conservation areas, national parks, or is sub-marginal."[7] Also, as of 1960, eight percent of the county's land area was devoted to urban use; it is presumed that this percentage has increased during the past ten years. The county's agricultural sector must then make do with an estimated twenty percent of the county's

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[6]Shaw E. Grigsby (ed.), Agricultural Growth with Urban Expansion (Gainesville: University of Florida, Agricultural Extension Service, n.d.), p. 7.

[7]Ibid., p. 15.

total surface area. In 1968, 54,735 acres or 86 square miles were utilized in the production of fruits and vegetables.

Farmlands are concentrated in the eastern half of the county in a region which lies adjacent to US Route One and Krome Avenue from South Miami to Florida City.

Agriculture anywhere involves risks and hardships, for when Man attempts to plant and harvest a crop, he must deal with factors as uncontrollable as the elements and the earth itself. Dade County seems to have more than its share of agricultural risks and hardships. Were it not for the overriding factor that local climate allows for the sale of fresh vegetables at a top price on northern markets, one would wonder if Dade County could exist as an agricultural area at all. For example, the weather itself presents frequent threats and occasional disasters to growers; killing frosts and cold spells occur from time to time. A one-night frost is capable of destroying acres of tomato or bean plants. Likewise, heavy winter rains occasionally cause crop damage by either beating plants to death or by flooding poorly drained fields. Such was the case during the past winter, when the combination of a severe cold spell in December, followed by heavy rains, have helped make this perhaps the worst tomato year in the past decade.

Even the earth seems inhospitable to Man's attempts to use it. Two types of soil predominate in the county's farming areas: Perrine Marl and Rockdale. Neither would produce vegetables unless diligently coaxed by man, machine and chemicals. Perrine Marl is swampland soil which calls for draining, leaching, and heavy fertilization before it can be put to use. Rockdale soils, which make up the major portion of the county's farmland, are rocky areas which call for plowing with bulldozers from two to five times in order to break up the surface limestone. After this stage, heavy fertilization is necessary, 1,500 to 6,000 pounds of fertilizer per acre are used,

depending on the soil and the desired crop. In 1968 tomato growers spent an average of $143.77 per acre for fertilizer. This is a large amount, particularly when it is understood that the average cost per acre for growing tomatoes (that is, soil preparation, planting, and cultivation until harvesting) was $468.80.

TABLE 2*

Dade County Tomatoes: Growing Costs

	Average cost per acre
Land rent	$ 27.39
Seed	6.08
Fertilizer	143.77
Spray & dust	86.04
Cultural labor	96.06
Machine hire	13.17
Gas, oil and grease	17.45
Repair and maintenance	31.37
Depreciation	18.63
Licenses and insurance	8.71
Interest on production capital	10.94
Interest on capital invested (other than land)	1.86
Miscellaneous expense	7.33
Total growing cost per acre	$468.80

*From Donald L. Brooke, "Costs and Returns from Vegetable Crops in Florida, Season 1968-1969," (Pamphlet, Ag. Econ. Report No. 2, Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Florida, Gainesville, February 1970), p. 28.

When the soil is finally broken, another threat exists which can quietly cause thousands of dollars of damage. Dade County's lands, with their low elevation and location at the edge of the ocean, are subject to salt intrusion which renders the soil too saline to produce crops. Salt intrusion may result from underground movement of brackish or salt water, flooding by high tides, or over-drainage by excessive pumping of fresh water. Whatever the actual cause, salt intrusion is but another of nature's menaces to Dade County's agriculture.

In addition to the presence of potential disasters due to climatic conditions, salt intrusion, urban growth, insects, new strains of plant diseases, etc., man himself has created even more problems than nature.

Manmade Problems:

1. The Market Place.

Natural hazards to Dade County agriculture are constantly present, but by and large, they have been dealt with to some degree of success. The problems presently caused by man and society will call for solutions, if there are any, infinitely more complex than the use of machines or chemicals. One of these problems is taking place within the agricultural marketing system itself. This study does not pretend to be an investigation of agricultural economics, but there are some marketing problems which must at least be mentioned here.

First of all, in spite of the fact that food prices have generally risen in the United States, farmers have received a smaller and smaller share of the final market value of their produce. It is commonly stated that growers of fresh vegetables now get 39 or 40 cents of the consumers' dollar spent in supermarkets. The other 60 cents go to middlemen and the food stores. The Florida Commissioner of Agriculture claims that the farmers' share of the consumer dollar has dropped a dime since 1959.[8] Farmers claim that their share has slowly been reduced by the domination of the agricultural marketplace by chain food stores which buy in larger and larger quantities. Growers and the State of Florida have taken some protective steps by organizing farmers' markets, but by and large, it appears that fresh vegetables are being distributed

[8]Doyle Conner, "The Farm Front," Weekly newsletter by the State Commissioner of Agriculture, 23 October 1969.

on a market dominated by chainstore buyers.

The second problem which affects Dade growers in the marketing of fresh vegetables is the very fact that they are fresh. When tomatoes or vegetables come ripe, they must be picked. (Actually more than 90 percent of Dade's tomatoes are picked and shipped green.) When they are picked they must be sold; fresh vegetables can sit in warehouses only for a short time. For example, green tomatoes have a life of about three weeks if picked green and kept under refrigeration. Consequently, crops can't be withheld from the market, no matter what the week's buying price is. Hence if a farmer has a field full of mature tomatoes and current tomato prices are bad, he may have to minimize his loss by allowing the field to rot rather than paying additional harvesting costs on an already worthless crop.

> Our present economic, social and international arrangements are based, in large measure, upon organized lovelessness.
> -Aldous Huxley
> The Perennial Philosophy, 1944

Obviously farmers in Dade County earn money, even though they may be forced to leave fields to rot from time to time; otherwise there would be no Dade County tomato growers. The point here is that farmers have little control over the marketing system, and hence are at times victimized by it.

2. The Wetback Tomato.

The problem most felt and most discussed by Florida and Dade County tomato farmers is the increasing competition from imported Mexican tomatoes. As has been pointed out, South Florida's greatest raison d'etre as a tomato producer has been the fact that fresh tomatoes can be produced during the northern winter months. Since five years ago, there has been an increasing inflow of vine ripe tomatoes grown in the northern states of Mexico. These tomatoes arrive at the same Canadian and American

market cities to which Florida tomatoes are sent at the same time, and can usually be sold for a lower price. The Mexican tomatoes are usually grown by California tomato ranchers who have moved their capital and sophisticated production methods to the Mexican states of Sonora, Chihuahua, and Coahuila. Here great tomato ranches have been established where lower taxes and cheap labor can be taken advantage of. These advantages have made the growers of northern Mexico serious competitors for the winter tomato market.

"GROWERS BATTLE MEXICO;
To Fight Produce Imports."
-Headline
Homestead, Fla. South Dade News Leader 13 March 1970

Carlot shipments from Mexico have been increasing in the past several years, while Florida's out-of-state shipments have decreased.

TABLE 3*

Carlot Shipments of Tomatoes

From Mexico into US.
From Dade County and Florida out of State.

Year	Mexico	Florida	Dade Co.
1966-67	11,199	19,189	8,028
1967-68	12,194	18,378	6,122
1968-69	15,217	15,300	4,447

*Compiled from: "Marketing Florida Vegetables, Summary of 1968 Season," (Pamphlet, US Dept. of Agriculture), pp. 83-85. "Marketing Florida Vegetables, Summary of 1969 Season," (Pamphlet, US Dept. of Agriculture), pp. 61-65.

Most striking in these figures is the steady increase of Mexican imports during this period; it is this factor that alarms South Florida's tomato growers. Generally, Florida's and Dade County's tomato production have remained constant over the past five years. The 1968-69 crop year was a poor one due to weather conditions. The 1969-70 crop year which has just ended was an extremely poor one, worse even than

the previous harvest. Figures are not yet available for the present season's shipments, but local authorities agree that (1) due to weather conditions this was the worst tomato crop that the county has seen in the past decade, and (2) Mexican exports to US and Canadian markets have been greater than ever.

Whether the two past years of diminishing Florida production and rising Mexican importation are the beginning of a trend, or whether Florida's two bad years will be reversed by a bumper crop in 1970-71 remains to be seen. But at present the Dade County agricultural sector is afraid and pessimistic. Last year the Homestead newspaper, South Dade News Leader, cited a United Press story which claimed that Mexico has the capacity to take over the tomato and entire winter vegetable market from Florida.[9] Dade County's tomato industry, it would appear, is going to face a crisis period for growers, crew leaders, and migrant farm workers alike.

The reason that Mexican tomatoes can compete so ably in the Canadian and US marketplaces is that labor costs are considerably lower in Mexico. Reportedly, tomato pickers in Mexico are paid $2.06 (US) a day or the equivalent of 22 to 30 cents an hour.[10] Meanwhile, local growers pay their workers many times that amount, perhaps eight or ten dollars on an average day and twenty-five dollars on an extremely good day. During the 1968-69 crop year, Dade County growers reported that their costs for picking tomatoes were $146.25 an acre or 66 cents per 40 pound shipping box.

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[9]South Dade News Leader (Homestead, Fla.), April 4, 1969, p. 3.

[10]Miami News, August 4, 1969, p. 6.

TABLE 4*

Dade County Tomatoes

Harvesting and Marketing Costs

	Average per Acre	Average per 40 lb. box
Picking expense	$146.25	$0.661
Grading and packing expense	124.60	.564
Containers	86.82	.393
Hauling	32.39	.149
Selling	33.12	.150
Total harvesting and marketing costs	$432.71	$1.917

*From Donald L. Brook, "Costs and Returns from Vegetable Crops in Florida, Season 1968-1969," p. 28.

At present there is some talk of establishing tomato import quotas in order to limit Mexican imports and to give Florida growers a stable percentage of annual domestic tomato sales. The Florida Tomato Committee, representing Florida growers, as well as Florida's congressional delegation, have both fomented for the establishment of such a quota. Reportedly these attempts have been frustrated by the formidable powers of Barry Goldwater and the US State Department. Goldwater is a defender of tomato imports in that they are beneficial to his home state. The majority of Mexican farm produce is brought into the United States through Arizona; in Arizona border towns bulk shipments of Mexican tomatoes are inspected, cleaned, packed and shipped, thus providing considerable employment in an otherwise depressed area. Lost jobs are akin to lost votes; hence Barry Goldwater has thrown his considerable political weight behind the continued importation of Mexican tomatoes without the hindrance of a quota. In terms of international trade, Mexico was designated a favored nation in the Kennedy Round of trade negotiations. According to local authorities, the US State Department has therefore frustrated attempts to place a duty on Mexican vegetables or

in any way to limit their importation.

From the point of view of the ordinary farm worker, this situation is doubly threatening. First, it would appear that commercial tomato growing in Dade County is in for a rocky future. Although the truth of the statement, "What is good for local agriculture is good for the migrants," is doubtful; the converse, "what is bad news for local agriculture is worse news for the migrants," has a grim ring of truth about it.

Secondly, local growers perceive the root of their problem as being labor costs. They ask themselves how they can possibly compete when they are paying five, six, or seven times as much for labor as the growers in Mexico. So that now, even more than in the past, it is within the interest of management to pay as little as possible to its labor force. In fact, the major keys to survival would seem to be the limitation and reduction of labor costs. Logical yes, but this tactic is diametrically opposed to the needs of migrant farm workers: higher wages and more work.

The Future:

This study in no way pretends to predict the future of Dade County's tomato production. But it must be said that, barring the limitation of Mexican imports, some profound changes are going to take place within the next decade. At present the University of Florida and private industry are developing a mechanical tomato picker which practically would make migrant farm workers obsolete. At its present stage of development, the tomato picker is inefficient and damages a large percentage of the tomatoes it picks. But it is certain that in the near future tomato growers will have their Eli Whitney.

A noteworthy trend in the tomato business is that production is becoming concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. According to the Dade County agricultural agent, there are now 49 tomato growers operating in the county; three years ago there were

nearly 150. This trend is in keeping with the national agricultural picture, small family farming has given way to large scale mechanized production controlled by corporate interests called "agribusiness." Further consolidation of the tomato business will probably come hand in hand with the mechanization of field work.

The future is not a bright one for Dade County's vegetable and tomato growers. Dimmer yet is the future of the eight to ten thousand migrant farm workers who come here each year. Among the Mexican-American workers who migrate from the Rio Grande Valley in Texas, their reason for coming here is often repeated: "There's no work anymore in the Valley." And none there is; former vegetable growers are now planting and harvesting sorghum, and cotton crops are almost entirely harvested by machine. Obsolescence will not be a new experience, but it will still be a bitter one. Either growers and farmworkers both will become obsolete as Dade County, the victim of cheap Mexican labor, ceases to produce tomatoes; or else migrant workers alone will become obsolete as local farmers are saved by an inexpensive and efficient harvesting machine--a tomato picker which needs no wages, Social Security, housing, or schools for its children. And then what? The pattern is familiar, for somehow the words economy, efficiency and obsolescence have become synonomous in the eternal push and pull of American labor and management. . .

They claimed in the east that they're payin' too high,
They say that your ore ain't worth digging
That it's much cheaper down South American town,
Where the miners work almost for nothing.
So the mine gates locked down. . .
And the room smelled heavy from drinkin'.
Where the sad silent song made the hours twice as long,
As I waited for the sun to go sinking. . . .

-Bob Dylan
"North Country Blues"

Chapter II

DADE COUNTY'S SPANISH SPEAKING MIGRANTS

. . . each Newt represents some kind of economic value, the value of a working force that lies latent in it waiting for exploitation. A Newt only costs a few cents a day to feed. . . , such an investment would easily pay for itself with any contractor. . .

In all such cases it is a matter of collective action demanding hundreds and thousands of working units, and of undertakings that modern technique would never venture upon unless it had an extremely cheap labor force at its disposal.

-Karl Capek
War With the Newts

-OJO-
TRABAJO HAY!

Se necesitan hombres y mujeres
a trabajar en Michigan, Ohio,
Florida y Colorado.

Para informacion completa
Pase Aqui.

-Sign in front of a labor contractor's office
Brownsville, Texas. July, 1969.

Each year during November, migrant farm workers begin to quietly drift into Dade County. As Miami's beachfront hotels begin to fill with tourists hoping for a week of good weather, South Dade's labor camps and low-cost housing areas fill with Negroes from Georgia, Puerto Ricans from New Jersey, Mexicans from Texas, and white anglos from nowhere, all hoping for a good tomato and vegetable season. Provided there is work, the migrant labor force will remain in Dade County until April or May and then will depart for varied destinations. The seasonal high water mark for the size of the migrant force is traditionally in February when tomato and vegetable harvests usually are heaviest.

The initial concern of this study is Dade County's Spanish speaking migrant work force. A general background picture of the county's agriculture having been presented, it is now time to focus upon Puerto Rican and Mexican-American migrants. The primary part of this focusing process will be done in terms of numerical estimates of migrant workers, descriptions of life styles and migration patterns, and finally some of the general problems encountered by migrant workers will be discussed.

PART 1: Migrant Farm Workers; How Many?

Any attempt at accurately counting migrant workers, or even estimating their numbers is apt to lead to confusion. The term "migrant farm worker" lends itself to several definitions and interpretations, hence making the issue even more cloudy. Migrant workers commonly slip by census-takers or local officials charged with recording births and deaths. Nomads, itinerants, wanderers, they live everywhere and nowhere. It is perhaps best to present the varied estimates that exist and leave the problem of an exact count to some patient computer.

Migrant Farm Workers in Florida:

In Florida one commonly reads in newspapers and magazines that there are one hundred thousand migrants at work here during the winter. This is a good round number, one that is easy to remember, and it may well represent the actual number of migrants at work during the peak of the season. The 1969 Florida Migrant Child Survey, conducted by the University of Miami, attempted to arrive at an accurate estimate of the state's migrants. A complex and rather sophisticated method of averaging and counterbalancing different sources of information was devised. The findings as stated in the study's report, Migrant Children in Florida, estimated that during Florida's two peak

season months, January and February, there were 61,694 and 61,627 migrant farm-workers in the state.[1]

Migrant Farm Workers in Dade County:

Estimates vary as to the number of migrants in Dade County during the crop year. According to the office of the County Agricultural Agent, there are 10,000 migrants working in Dade County's fields during the February seasonal peak. At other times during the winter season there are approximately 6,600 at work in the county.

The Agricultural Division of the Florida Industrial Commission set the maximum seasonal number at 8,000 plus another 2,500 working in packinghouses.

Once again the figures stated by the Migrant Children in Florida Report were lower than other estimates: 5,260 migrants in Dade County during the month of February. This report made estimates for all twelve months of the year; it is of interest to observe the yearly rise and fall of the countywide migrant population.

TABLE 5*

Dade County: Monthly Census of Migrant Farm Workers

Month	No. of Migrants
Sept.	894
Oct.	2,621
Nov.	3,811
Dec.	4,484
Jan.	5,172
Feb.	5,260
March	4,910
April	4,392
May	1,755
June	535
July	330
Aug.	353

*From, Migrant Children in Florida, Vol. II, p. 681.

[1]E. John Kleinert, Migrant Children in Florida (Miami: University of Miami,

Florida's Migrants, Ethnic Groups:

According to the Migrant Children in Florida study, the Florida and Dade County migrant population is composed of three major ethnic groups. In terms of the entire state, the Kleinert Report found more than half of the migrants to be American Negroes, and about a third of all migrants to be "Spanish-American" which includes both Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans. The remainder are American Whites and "West Indians" which includes Bahamians, Jamaicans and Haitians.

TABLE 6*

Florida Migratory Workers, By Ethnic Grouping and Sex

ETHNIC GROUPING	MALE %age	FEMALE %age
Negro	54.51	58.65
Spanish-American	33.44	29.31
White	10.57	11.30
West Indian	1.27	.57
Other	.20	.17

*From, Migrant Children in Florida, Vol. 1, p. 153.

The Migrant Children in Florida study was largely based on questionnaires administered to 9,065 adult migrant workers randomly sampled in all of Florida's counties where there was significant migrant activity. One of the questions asked was, "What language do you speak in the home?" In the entire state, 67.70% answered English, 27.71% answered Spanish, and 4.39% responded English and Spanish with equal frequency.[2] This would verify, in general terms, the findings of the above table.

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in cooperation with the Florida State Board of Education, 1969), Vol. 1, p. 51.

[2] Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 154.

One of the more interesting discoveries of the Kleinert study was that, "The interstate Spanish-American migrant coming into Florida often chooses his destination by crop preference rather than according to the current labor demand."[3] Vegetable crops seem to strongly attract the "Spanish-American" migrant population while citrus crops in central Florida attract American Negroes. In the five major South Florida vegetable producing counties of Dade, Palm Beach, Collier, Hendry, and Lee, 62.11% of the migrants interviewed were "Spanish-American." Conversely, in the five major central Florida citrus counties of Polk, Lake, Orange, Highlands, and St. Lucie, 78.75% of the migrants interviewed were American Negroes while only 5.53% were Spanish-American.[4]

Dade County's Migrants, Ethnic Groups:

In general terms, it is agreed upon that about half of Dade County's migrants are Spanish speaking people. In this instance the officials of the County Agent's Office, the Florida Industrial Commission, as well as the Kleinert report are all in agreement. The Migrant Children in Florida study found that 52.7% of the 643 randomly interviewed adult migrants in Dade County were Spanish-American.

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[3] Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 76.

[4] Ibid., Vol. 1, pp. 75 and 78.

TABLE 7*

Dade County: Ethnic Group of Interviewees

Ethnic/Racial Group	Number	Percent
Mainland Negro	230	35.77
Mainland White	67	10.42
SPANISH AMERICAN	338	52.57
Bahamian & Jamaican	8	1.24

*From, Migrant Children in Florida, Vol. 1, p. 78.

In Dade County, in response to the question, "What language is spoken in your home?", 44.21% answered English and 41.21% said Spanish. 13.98% claimed that they spoke both languages with equal facility.[5] Assuming that this latter group is composed of bilingual Spanish-Americans, it could be stated that 55.19% of Dade County's migrants speak Spanish. This checks with reasonable accuracy against the figure 52.57% in the preceding table of ethnic groupings.

Dade County, "Spanish-Americans" Defined and Counted:

The term "Spanish-American" may be a useful one, as it was in the Kleinert study, but in reality it is highly inaccurate: there is no such person as a "Spanish-American." Since the 1820s those living in Spanish speaking paris of Latin America have declined to be termed "Spanish-Americans." Likewise, if one were to call a Spaniard living as a resident in the United States a "Spanish-American," he probably would be technically correct, but by using the last half of this appellation, one would be left with a highly insulted Spaniard. In the Rocky Mountain States there are several thousand Basque sheepherders, most of whom have spent the major portion of their lives in this country. Perhaps these shepherds technically could be called "Spanish-Americans,"

5Ibid., Vol. II, p. 1099.

but the double-barrelled insult of calling a Basque an American as well as a Spaniard would probably lead to bloodshed. The only alternative is to drop the term altogether.

In Dade County Spanish speaking migrant workers are either Mexican Americans from Texas (known also as Texas-Mexicans or Chicanos*--Mexicans born in Mexico who are working in the US either legally or illegally--) and Puerto Ricans. Perhaps there are a few Dominicans or Hondurans working in the tomato fields, but to date they have not been seen or counted.

It is of interest to note that no Cuban refugees were found to be working as field hands in Dade County. Reasons for this are probably that the vast majority of Cubans who are in Florida are urban people, and that family connections or the Cuban Refugee Assistance Program have allowed exiles to get along without going to the fields. Conversely, tomato packinghouse work is largely done by Cuban exiles. An agent of the Florida Industrial Commission in Princeton claimed that 25% of the county's packinghouse work (washing, sorting, culling, and crating) is done by Cubans.

During the past tomato season this writer worked for several days in a Perrine packinghouse. There it was observed that at least half of the workers were Cubans, mainly women and middle aged men. Packinghouse work has become an established and accepted seasonal job for many Cuban housewives and senior family members. Each tomato season informal carpools and telephone networks (which announce whether or not there is work each morning) are established in Miami's Cuban community. But other than in this limited aspect, Dade County's Cubans do not appear to be involved

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*Chicanos are Mexican-Americans who live in Texas, the Southwest, or anywhere in the US. The term originally comes from the Yaqui Indian pronunciation of the word mexicano; the Yaquis pronounced the "x" as a "ch"--hence "mechicano," and now "Chicano."

in agricultural activities.

According to the Florida Industrial Commission, 35-40% of Dade's migrants are either Mexican or Mexican-Americans, and 10% are Puerto Ricans. This estimate is roughly borne out by the Miami office of the Florida Employment Service which claims that, according to last year's reports from growers, there were 925 Puerto Rican migrants in the county at peak season. One other source, Mr. Wendell Rollason, executive director of the Redlands Migrant Ministry, has stated in a recent interview that there are probably around 600 Puerto Rican migrants in Dade County.

The Migrant Children in Florida study does not throw much light on this question. Adult migrant interviewees were asked, "Where were you born?" But the results of this inquiry are given only on a statewide basis; this at least indicates something about the composition of the Spanish speaking migrant population.

TABLE 8*

A Rank Ordering of the Six Most Frequently Responded Places of Birth
(For entire state)

Birthplace	% of Statewide Migrant Population
Texas	18.11
Georgia	17.75
Florida	15.50
Alabama	9.23
Puerto Rico	8.99
Mexico	5.31

*From, Migrant Children in Florida, Vol. 1, p. 145.

It would not be too daring to assume that almost all of those migrants born in Texas are Mexican-Americans. The 8.99% responding that Puerto Rico was the place of birth roughly reflects the nine or ten percent of Dade's migrants as indicated by other sources. It would be reasonable to assume on the basis of the above estimates

that the number of Puerto Rican migrants in Dade County lies somewhere between 600 and 1,000 workers at the peak of the vegetable season.

Worthy of note is the fact that 5.31% of the migrants interviewed stated that they were born in Mexico. This would include people who have gained US citizenship, those who have been granted work permits, and an occasional wetback. Work permits are issued to those who have achieved lawful admission to the US as immigrants. In order to obtain an immigrant visa the immigrant must obtain a "labor certification" which is a Department of Labor clearance to the effect that there is a shortage of workers in the applicant's occupation. Upon gaining labor certification and a visa, Mexican citizens are granted border crossing permits known as "green cards" with which they may enter the US freely and work where they please.*

No one will ever be able to state the exact number of migrants in any given area. In a sense, migratory farm workers are truly "citizens of nowhere." During the harvesting season they live quietly hidden away in labor camps which are found away from the main roads. At the season's end they quietly fade out of the county a few at a time in pickup trucks, the family car, or battered old busses. By the nature of their being migrants, Dade County's field hands are fated to arrive, to work, to wait for work, and to depart unseen and unconsidered by Miami's tourists and proud homeowners.

> Some of us are illegal, and others are not wanted,
> Our work contracts are out and we've got to move on.
> Goodbye to my Juan, Goodbye Rosalita

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*It is not a difficult matter to prove to the Department of Labor that a labor shortage exists in the applicant's occupation. Likewise, there is no way to assure that the immigrant will continue working in that occupation for which he was certified. At present, there are some 650,000 green card holders dispersed throughout the United States and Mexico according to the Texas Good Neighbor Commission (Texas Migrant Labor, 1968 Migration). Needless to say, green card holders constitute a genuine threat of competition to Mexican-American workers in the Southwest, in Texas, and in California.

Adios mis amigos Jesus y Maria . . .
-Woody Guthrie
"Plane Wreck at Los Gatos"

PART 2: The Life Styles and Migration Patterns of Dade County's Spanish Speaking Migrants

California, Arizona I make all your crops
Then its north up to Oregon to gather your hops
Dig beets from your ground, cut the grapes from your vine
To set on your table your light sparkling wine.
-Woody Guthrie
"Pastures of Plenty"

Surprisingly enough, the Spanish speaking migrants who come each year to Dade County in search of work do so in a rather consistent and orderly fashion. The popular image of raggle-taggle bands of gypsies who straggle to the fields each year is a false one. The majority of migrants who come here come to earn money, and hence they have developed rational, functional patterns of travelling, living, and working as any other wage earner must do. In reality, it should be no surprise that migrant workers' lives are so ordered; yet in a society which couples a permanent residence with the idea of respectability, and a society where the word "migrant" can be used as a disparaging term, this may well be surprising.

The actual routes of travel and the life styles of Dade County's Mexican-American and Puerto Rican are quite distinct, but the reasons for migrating and for coming here each year are very similar. The annual arrival of migrants in South Florida can be pretty well attributed to one overall motivation: economics. There is agricultural work in South Florida while there is none in the rest of the eastern United States. The broader reaching question of why migrants earn their living by migrating and doing farm work will be investigated in this study. But the existence of

migrations and migrant workers was perhaps most succinctly expressed in 1928 at a national convention of social workers: "Now the Mexican's (Mexican-American and Puerto Rican) habits are not migratory, but the habits of the industries which furnish him a livelihood most certainly are."[6] Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans migrate here each year because they are forced to by their own lack of skills, local employment conditions, and nature's own seasonal changes. The cold fact remains that there is little employment in rural Puerto Rico or south Texas, at given times of the year when there is work here; albeit work that does not pay well and work that requires certain hardships; hence migrants and migrations.

Migrants as a group do not move about in a regimented fashion; their comings and goings are as varied and confusing as those of any group of people. But there are general patterns of movement and general life styles which are more or less held in common by the migrant groups being discussed. Hopefully these movement patterns and life styles can be rationally sorted out and presented without creating false "typical" migrants and two-dimensional stereotypes.

In years past, the majority of Florida's migrants travelled north in what is still known as the "east coast migrant stream." These migrants, mainly American Negroes, spent November through May in Florida and then followed the east coast vegetable, potato, and strawberry crops northward, finishing the season picking apples in upstate New York. This stream still exists, more than half of Florida's migrants are Blacks, and a large percentage of them move north in this established fashion. These migrants,

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[6]Quoted in: Nick C. Vaca, "The Mexican-American in the Social Sciences, 1912-1970," El Grito, Vol. III, No. 3 (Spring, 1970), p. 20. Original source cited by Vaca: Charles Thomson, "Mexicans-An Interpretation," National Conference of Social Work, 1927, p. 532.

although not within the focus of this study, deserve at least passing comment. American Negro migrants who travel "up the stream" are, in the opinion of this writer, the last true American agricultural peons. They are people, even among migrants, whose existence is most characterized by poverty, disease, illiteracy, rootlessness, anti-social behavior, and exploitation. This is a strong statement which may be subject to challenge on academic or other grounds. If this study has drawn any conclusions at all, one of the major conclusions is that Dade County's Spanish speaking migrants have managed to maintain a functional and viable social existence as a subculture while living and working in a context of poor wages, too little work, substandard housing, and a general sense of alienation. This cannot be said of the majority of the Black migrants working in the east coast stream. Their conditions fairly shout for rapid and massive action to better their lot in the same nation that produced moonrockets, a multibillion dollar war machine, and electric toothbrushes. The shout goes unheard.

Perhaps the best information source or commentary on these migrants is a CBS television documentary titled "Harvest of Shame." Also two excellent monographs, They Follow the Sun and On the Season, have been published by the Florida State Board of Health.[7]

Dade County's Spanish Speaking Migrants

1. The Puerto Ricans. Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans are highly distinct from one another both as cultural groups and as migrants. In fact, the more one

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[7]Earl L. Koos, They Follow the Sun (Jacksonville, Florida State Board of Health, Bureau of Maternal and Child Health, 1957). Robert H. Browning and Travis J. Northcutt, On the Season (Jacksonville, Florida State Board of Health, Bureau of Maternal and Child Health, 1961). Edward R. Morrow (ed.), "Harvest of Shame," CBS Television Report, 1960.

observes these two groups, the more of a fallacy it seems to lump them into one group, be it "Spanish speaking," "Spanish-American," or "Spanish surnamed"; all of these group terms infer a similarity which is not really existent. First of all, in the context of south Florida's Spanish speaking migrant population, Puerto Ricans are greatly in the numerical minority. Attempts to estimate their numbers have already been indicated; of importance here is simply that when one refers to the Spanish speaking migrants of Dade County, one by and large is speaking of Mexican-Americans rather than Puerto Ricans.

As a group, the Puerto Rican migrants possess several distinguishing characteristics. Most notable is the fact that the majority of Puerto Ricans who harvest in Dade's fields are men who come here singly without families. While Mexican-American migrant employment is largely a family affair, those Puerto Ricans who migrate are mainly young, single men. In the course of gathering information for this study, sixteen Puerto Ricans were formally interviewed, all of them were single men, and all except three were in their twenties or early thirties. This rather haphazard sample is nearly meaningless in itself, but it is corroborated by local authorities--for example, the Princeton Farm Labor Office and various migrant camp managers who all state that there are "very few" Puerto Rican families who migrate to south Dade each year.

The word "single" in this case, may or may not mean unmarried; what is important is that the men migrate to Florida alone. In the case of about half of the men interviewed, they were married but had left their wives in either Puerto Rico, New Jersey, or New York. The result in any case is that most Puerto Ricans in south Dade live as single men in barracks-like dormitories, eating in common dining halls.

As could be expected, although Mexican-American and Puerto Rican arrivals and departures in Dade County coincide, their patterns of migration are quite distinct.

Puerto Ricans travel a triangular route, migrating between south Florida, Puerto Rico, and the New York/New Jersey area. Most Puerto Ricans arrive in Dade County in November or December, or earlier if there is cultivating work available. They work here for the duration of the tomato and vegetable season and then they leave in April or May. There are few reported cases of Puerto Ricans working their way north in the "stream" as many Blacks do; rather most of them travel directly to New Jersey, Delaware, or eastern Pennsylvania. At this time there is work cutting asparagus, and later harvesting spinach, lettuce, and turnips. Agricultural work in the north continues into September; after the first few frosts, Puerto Rican migrants begin their slack season. Where they go and what they do from mid-September through November is an individual matter; some go to New York City where they may have family and they may find work--others fly to Puerto Rico also to visit family and seek temporary work. In mid-November they again appear in Florida, having come by Greyhound from New York or having flown from San Juan. There are many variations on this basic travel pattern, and these variations are facilitated by the fact that air fares between Miami and San Juan and San Juan and New York City are nearly the same, hence workers may and often do fly from New York to San Juan and then on to Miami, depending on family situations, budget, the availability of work, and so forth.

The field workers who come to south Florida are ostensibly not a part of the New York City/San Juan Puerto Rican population which has been studied and described by Clarence Senior and Oscar Lewis. The Puerto Rican migrant farm workers are strongly rural people who have perhaps spent time in San Juan or New York but who have not been urbanized nor have they mastered the urban milieu sufficiently to earn a living from it. An official of the Florida Industrial Commission, Mr. Brian Page, recounted the story of a south Dade grower who, during the 1963 growing season, found himself

with a bumper crop of tomatoes, a favorable market, but with almost no workers to do the picking. He thus arranged, through a contact in New York, to charter busses and hire about a hundred and fifty men from Spanish Harlem. This proved to be no problem, and three or four days later he had his men in the field. All of the men had needed employment when in New York and all had agreed to the grower's wage, hence the situation looked ideal. However, none of the men had been field workers before, and other than the fact that they needed work, none were particularly attracted to "stoop" labor. By the end of the same week the grower had only half of his Puerto Ricans left, and midway into the second week, so the story goes, all of them had either left to look for work in Miami or had returned to New York.

Most of the Puerto Ricans interviewed claimed that they were from San Juan. But upon further questioning, they revealed that they were born in the island's interior, had spent large protions of their lives there, and that they still had closely related family members in the campo.

The number of Puerto Rican migrants in Dade County seems to be steadily diminishing. For example, in the late 1950s John W. Campbell, one of the county's most important tomato growers, used a harvesting crew made up almost entirely of Puerto Ricans as well as a few Negroes. Since 1960 fewer and fewer Puerto Ricans have come back each year, until now only about 10 percent of Campbell's field workers are Puerto Ricans. This situation is reflected throughout Dade County's migrant population.

The fading away of the Puerto Rican migrants is explained by four different theories which all seem to compliment each other and indicate trends which have taken place in the past ten years. First, Puerto Rican migrations in general to the mainland US have steadily dropped off in the past decade.[8] This may be due to increased

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[8]Stanley L. Friedlander, Labor Migration and Economic Growth (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1968), p. 114.

employment opportunities in Puerto Rico or it may be due to New York's oversaturation with Puerto Ricans. Secondly, many of the earlier migrant workers have settled into urban life in New York or New Jersey, or else they have found year-round agricultural work in the New Jersey-Delaware-Pennsylvania area.* Thirdly, many Puerto Rican migrants have married or brought their wives to south Florida and thus have had less inclination to migrate north and south each year. Many have settled in Dade County either in Miami where there is a sizable Puerto Rican barrio, or they have found year-round agricultural or semi-agricultural work in south Dade. Many have found work with year-round flower and tropical fruit farms and many others work as maintenance men or semiskilled employees of local growers. The fourth and final reason why Puerto Rican migrants have become scarcer is that they have been replaced by a rapidly growing Mexican-American migrant labor force. Whether or not Puerto Ricans will disappear completely from the Dade County agricultural scene is almost impossible to predict. The Puerto Rican decrease may have levelled off, or the trends of the past decade might continue until there are literally no Puerto Rican migrants left in Dade County.

2. The Mexican-Americans.

El carcelero le pregutaba;
Espanol eres? Y el contesto
Soy mexicano y orgullo serlo
Aunque me nieguen a mi el perdon.
-Anonymous
"Vida, proceso y muerte de Aurelio Pompa"

Mexican-Americans, in proportion to the migrant population, and in actual

*An example of this is the mushroom business which is flourishing (if mushrooms can be said to "flourish") in New Jersey. There the cultivating, harvesting and packing of these mushrooms is done almost entirely by Puerto Rican ex-migrants.

numbers, are increasing each year in south Florida. They first arrived after the "big freeze" of 1955 and 1956; ever since that year Mexican-Americans have become more and more numerous in Dade County and are increasingly in demand by growers. As has been pointed out, it is extremely difficult to ascertain how many Mexican-Americans have worked in Dade County in recent years. If we accept the popular estimate that Dade County employs 10,000 migrants during the peak season, and then we accept the commonly stated proportion that 40% of the county's migrants are Mexican-Americans, then the statement could be made that during the January-March period there are somewhere around 4,000 Mexican-American migrants in Dade County. This extremely crude estimate will have to stand, but it is a comfort, at least, to have some estimate in mind while discussing the county's Mexican-American migrant population.

While Puerto Rican migrants come as single men, the great majority of Mexican-Americans come in family groups. Husbands, wives, children, grandmothers, in-laws; Chicanos come to Dade County in any and all possible family combinations. It is this trait of travelling, living, and working together both as nuclear and extended families, that is the key, more than any other single factor, to understanding Mexican-Americans as migrant workers in Dade County.

The Kleinert study found "Spanish-American" migrants to have a mean family unit size (that is, living under the same roof) of 4.83 members--a family size larger than that of Negroes or whites.[9] In actuality this figure is probably lower than the mean family size for Mexican-American families, for the category "Spanish-American" includes Puerto Ricans who generally travel as single men.

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[9]Kleinert, Migrant Children in Florida, Vol. I, p. 157. The mean family size for American Negro migrants was 4.64 and for whites it was 4.27.

It would be safe to say that almost all of the Mexican-American migrant group comes from southern Texas, mainly from the four Lower Rio Grande Valley counties of Starr, Hidalgo, Willicy, and Cameron. The Rio Grande Valley area, which composes the southmost tip of Texas, has a population which is more than 80% made up of people of Mexican descent.[10] The "Valley" is an agricultural area and is markedly non-industrial; most crops, cotton and sorghum, are cultivated and harvested by machine, thus providing little employment. Most of the Chicanos who populate this area are rural or semi-rural people. Unemployment is extremely high in the Rio Grande Valley, prices are depressed, and there is little generalized economic activity; it is truly an underdeveloped area of the United States.

Realizing the degree of rurality of the inhabitants of the Valley and the high percentage of unemployment, and finally, realizing that Mexicans and Mexican-Americans have traditionally been employed in groups to travel and work in the United States, heavy yearly out-migrations from the Valley appear to be a natural and inevitable response to an otherwise intolerable economic situation.

In 1968 there were 395,076 people living in the four counties that compose the Lower Rio Grande Valley. According to a report published in 1968 by the Texas Good Neighbor Commission (formerly the Texas Council on Migrant Labor), 40,500 adult farm workers migrated from the Valley in 1968.[11] This figure is presumed to be extremely low, for it was based upon the number of migrants who registered with the Texas Employment Commission, and it is common knowledge that large numbers of workers do not bother to register.

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[10]US Bureau of Census, 1960.

[11]Texas Good Neighbor Commission, Texas Migrant Labor, The 1968 Migration (n.p.: Texas Good Neighbor Commission, 1968), Appendix, p. 2.

In any case, large numbers of Mexican-Americans flow out of the Rio Grande Valley each year to seek work in the nation's fields. It was observed by this writer that the major portion of those who migrate have roots in the Valley, migrants often own a house and almost invariably have kinship ties to the Valley. Hence migrations are conceived of as temporary trips out of the Valley with the object of return firmly in mind. The importance of this attachment to a town or a barrio is primary to understanding Mexican-American migrants.

In their own conceptions of themselves they are not wanderers but a people with an established home and homeland which they must leave each year and to which they return as often as possible. It is interesting to note that when Mexican-Americans speak of Florida fieldwork wages, they frequently will do so in terms of how much can be brought back to Texas at the season's end. Money brought back, the real "profit" of a year's migration, is used to sustain the family while not working, or to improve one's house, buy a new truck, or pay taxes and bills--hardly the spending patterns of a rootless or nomadic people.

Typically, migration patterns are described by migrants in terms of journeys out of and back to the Rio Grande Valley. In November or December families will drive, usually in a pickup truck with a camper arrangement in back, from southern Texas to southern Florida, a three or four day trip. Upon arrival, families will seek out housing and employment and then stay in the area as long as possible. In good years this would mean that a "typical" family will stay in Dade County from some time in November until mid-May. In years when work is scarce, there is considerable migration within Florida. For example, a family which has been working in Dade County for the tomato season may pack up for Collier County's melon crop when Dade's tomatoes thin out. Or if the weather has been unfavorable in Dade County,

migrants will go to Palm Beach County in hopes that weather conditions and crops may be more favorable there. Another frequent intrastate migrant pattern involves staying and working in Dade or Collier Counties as late into the tomato or vegetable season as possible and then working in the later tomato harvests of the Ruskin area (Hillsborough County) on Florida's west coast through the months of May and early June.

As Florida's last vegetable crops are harvested, usually by late May or early June, Chicanos drive back to the Rio Grande Valley to rest a few weeks, repair their houses and cars, visit their families, and relax.

In June and early July heavy out-migrations take place from south Texas. The Mexican-American farmworkers who come to Florida are a minority among the Rio Grande Valley migrants. Most people who migrate go north at this time to Ohio, Michigan, Colorado, Wisconsin, and even as far away as New Jersey, in order to harvest summer and early fall crops. It is in this outflow that the Florida migrant usually makes his second trip of the year, returning to the Valley in September or October. After the summer migration, the Florida-bound migrant and his family will remain at home in the Valley until around November when they will begin the cycle again, driving around the rim of the Gulf of Mexico to south Florida.

In search of work, Mexican-American migrants who travel the Texas-Florida-Texas-Michigan-Texas route, drive thousands of miles each year. One of the most frequently heard complaints made about migrating as a means of earning a living is that excessive travel and the hazards of the road make migrating a very dangerous occupation.

While in Dade County most Mexican-Americans live in small enclaves, either in farm labor camps or in other areas where inexpensive housing can be found. The

Migrant Children in Florida study found that the mean weekly rent paid by migrants in Dade County was $11.33.[12] This year five million dollars in federal monies have been granted and loaned to south Dade housing authorities for the construction of new migrant housing facilities. This action was largely spurred by the death of three Mexican-American children whose house burnt to the ground last Christmas. This took place at the now closed, four-hundred family Krome Avenue Labor Camp, known locally as "Mexico City." At peak season there traditionally has been a scarcity of migrant housing and there is always a lack of suitable, decent housing. In extremely bad years, migrant farm workers have been forced to camp out en masse on the banks of south Dade's irrigation canals while they wait for work or a place to live.

> You'll be a-campin' by a ditch, you an' fifty other famblies. An' he'll look in your tent to see if you got anything lef' to eat. An' if you got nothin'; he says, 'Wanna job?'
>
> -John Steinbeck
> The Grapes of Wrath, 1939

The presence of several thousand Mexican-Americans in south Dade for a few months each year gives the area an unusual cultural overlay. A Homestead radio station on weekends broadcasts "Fiesta Mexicana" which features Mexican music and announcers who broadcast in Spanish of the Mexican variety. A Catholic church in Goulds holds regular Sunday afternoon Mexican-American fiesta, complete with polkas and tamales. Most south Dade grocery stores stock Jalapeno chiles and other Mexican foods. And from the open door of Moreno's tortilleria in Perrine, the sounds of the latest Jorge Negrete album, played full blast, the squeaking of a tortilla making machine, and the aroma of baking corn meal all mingle and waft onto South Dixie Highway.

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[12]Kleinert, Vol. 2, p. 1135.

The relationship between Mexican-American and Puerto Rican migrants is not a cordial one. Puerto Ricans often claim that the Chicanos are clannish and aloof. Mexican-Americans stereotype the Puerto Ricans as uncouth, as Negroes, as drunkards, and as violence-prone wastrels. This markedly chilly relationship between the two groups is probably caused by three factors. First, Puerto Ricans are frequently supervised by Mexican-American crew chiefs and overseers--this situation leads to countless petty slights and grudges which may well be generalized to include all Puerto Ricans or all Mexican-Americans. Secondly, Puerto Rican men come to Florida alone; Chicanos come as families and in this sense do appear to be clannish. What would appear to be at issue here is that Mexican-Americans feel that they must at times close ranks in order to protect wives and daughters from Puerto Rican men who are viewed to be a generally bad class of people and, in this case, as predators.

Finally, if one looks at the overall trends in the migrant labor force, it appears that Mexican-Americans are becoming the dominant migrant group while Puerto Ricans and Negroes are being displaced. Growers almost unanimously favor Mexican-American work crews over others because they are repeatedly claimed to be "dependable."

Mexican-Americans migrate to south Florida in increasing numbers because they need work and it is available here. In its own way, this is a very happy and comfortable situation for both growers and Mexican-American migrants, but Negroes and Puerto Ricans, assuming that they want to continue working as migrants, are losing out to Chicano competition. Mexican-Americans are very well equipped to compete in the labor market, largely due to their working and travelling as family groups. Families add a stability which leads growers to speak of "dependability." For example, a single man may stay in bed to nurse a Monday morning hangover rather than go to

work, clearly making that man undependable in the eyes of a grower or overseer. But a man, living with his wife and several children, suffering from a similar Monday morning hangover, will probably struggle out of bed and go to work anyway. Families exert a quiet but firm social pressure on a man that will usually lead to more regular work habits or "dependability."

The fact that Mexican-Americans often work in family groups as well, allows them to accept work which many single men will not bother with; growers, knowing that the work must be done, look upon this as responsible or "dependable" behavior. Typically, Mexican-American families turn out to work in the fields together, thus providing several incomes for the same household. Due to this fact they can afford to acdept lower pay, for work that is deemed by others as undesirable.

This does not mean that if Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and Negroes are working side by side the Mexican-American contingent will be paid less. The pinch usually comes about in the following manner: if a grower is looking for a crew to do a day's work that will not pay well, for example,picking tomatoes in a field that has been twice picked before, or doing work that is paid on an hourly basis such as weeding, many will refuse to do the work even though there is none other available. A Mexican-American, thinking of his many mouths to feed and his mortgaged house back in Texas, will turn out with his wife and perhaps his two oldest children to do the day's work; a day's wage, even though low, if multiplied by four, may be a respectable day's pay. This is once again a comfortable arrangement for the grower, who gets his work done, and the worker, who has earned a day's pay, even though the per hour, per capita wage was not a living wage. Once again this is deemed as "dependable" by growers; the word "dependable," so used, begins to take on a new and sinister meaning. Meanwhile fewer and fewer Puerto Ricans come back to south Florida;

they have been out-competed in the labor market.

> Cheap labor is considered a divine right by agribusiness, and agribusiness will do anything and everything to make sure the divine right is granted.
>
> -Cesar Chavez
> Delano, California
> Spring, 1969

PART 3: Migrant Farm Workers as a Social Problem

I pity the poor immigrant
Who tramples through the mud
Who fills his mouth with laughing
And who fills his town with blood.
Whose visions in the final end
Must shatter like the glass.
I pity the poor immigrant
When his gladness comes to pass.

-Bob Dylan
"I Pity the Poor Immigrant"

At various times since the Depression, America's fickle finger of social conscience has pointed to migrant farm workers as being beset with social problems, or as being a social problem themselves. In the middle and late 1960s, the country seemed to become vaguely aware of the "plight" of farm workers to the point that it is now common knowledge that one of our society's many social ills is the "migrant problem." In reality, numerous individuals, organizations, and government agencies have become concerned, in a variety of ways, with migrant workers. When this minor deluge of observation and study will turn into action and social change is another matter.

It is felt that any investigation of migrant workers must, in some way, point out that massive and complex social problems are very much a part of the life of migrant life. How to do this boggles the mind, for the broad definition and description of general migrant problems is not the major focus of this study. Problem areas are so

numerous and complicated and are so subject to an infinite number of definitions and points of view, that the best possible treatment of migrant problems here must be concise, unquantified, grossly over-simplified and under-explained.

The work that migrant workers do is hard, their living conditions miserable, and their pay, although under ideal conditions may at times be high, is poor when calculated on a per annum basis. Typically, the migrant is called upon to do field work which involves continued stooping and lifting. The jobs are usually dirty, exhausting and boring. They tend to live and work in isolated areas, well away from the comforts and stimuli of twentieth century urban and suburban American life.

The housing provided is often dilapidated and lacking in adequate ventilation, toilets and bathing facilities. Health services are usually remote from migrants' work locations and living areas, and usually are beyond their means. Resultingly, migrant farm workers and their families suffer disproportionately from preventable infective and parasitic diseases. Because they do not receive checkups and regular medical care, migrants seek medical help only when acutely stricken.

Since migrants are harvesting food crops it is ironic to note malnutrition as one of their problems. Due to their poverty, remoteness from markets, and poor traditional dietary habits, many migrants are ill fed when compared with the rest of society.

Education and training services for the children of migrants and migrant workers themselves are inadequate, although several hopeful advances have been made. Nevertheless, the education of migrant children, fragmented by frequent moves and made threatening by language difficulties and an apparent lack of hospitality by local schools, must be greatly reformed before it will equip the majority of migrant children to be anything other than migrants.

As seasonal wanderers present in communities for a relatively short time,

migrants often find no one interested in assuming responsibility for their welfare. By law or by practice, migrants are usually cut off from the normal range of community services. Their labor is needed, but their presence in many communities is resented or at best, tolerated. Not infrequently they encounter discrimination and extra-legal restrictions.

Migrant farm workers, although often hungry, are not usually able to qualify for government food distribution programs. Although they are often unemployed, they are not covered by unemployment insurance. Though they are in financial need, they are frequently barred from receiving public assistance by residence requirements. Though working in a hazardous occupation--the injury and fatality rates of the country's farm workers are only exceeded by the mining and construction industries--they are excluded from workmen's compensation, or at best, are only partially covered. And although in need of government aid and reforms, they cannot usually meet the residence requirements which would allow them to vote in their interests.

Finally, farm workers as a group are not organized and have little sense of commonality, in fact they are often divided by latent or active hostilities among themselves. These hostilities are often a direct result of competition for the same work opportunities and wages, much as we have seen in the case of the Puerto Rican and Mexican-American hostility displayed in Dade County.

Disorganized and without the same collective bargaining rights possessed by other American workers, migrant workers are not only underpaid, underfed and poorly educated, they are powerless in the context of their work situation, powerless in the context of American society, and powerless before their destinies.

The entire situation is made more lamentable by the fact that this seems to be a constant, and by now "normal" social pattern. In 1932 Paul S. Taylor wrote a book

An American Mexican Frontier, about Mexican-Americans at home and a-migrating in the American Southwest. His impressions, although formed in the Southwest nearly forty years ago, are still valid in south Florida in 1970:

> Mexican labor was welcome in the Southwest because it filled a labor need not likely to be met by workers of Anglo status at the wages and under the working conditions which the farmers of the Southwest were prepared to provide. The warmth of their welcome is in proportion to their willingness to continue to fill this need without becoming ambitious for something different, and their willingness to keep their place in social matters.[13]

The foregoing statements and observations are presented unhindered by statistics and footnotes, and they may well be challenged for a variety of reasons. Yet the fact remains that migrant workers, Mexican-Americans in particular, form a hard-working, law abiding, and in their own terms, socially functional group. Yet migrant workers, while living within the American value tenets of hard work and respect for the law, are obviously receiving unequal benefits from a highly prosperous society which was founded on the belief of equality of opportunity for all.

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[13]Paul S. Taylor, An American Mexican Frontier (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1932), p. 250.

Chapter III

WORK SUPERVISORS AND MIDDLEMEN

When men work, particularly when men travel to work, it is customary that they organize themselves both formally and informally. Organization implies a group with a leader who carries out specific duties within the context of the work and travel situations. When men travel across space and cultural boundaries in search of work, it appears that there is even more of a tendency to fall into some form of organizational pattern for protection and for security. Oscar Handlin, in his now classic The Uprooted, noted this organizational pattern among European immigrants to the United States.

> The men banded together in gangs and worked together under a leader. That was the way that seemed proper to those who had once been peasants. As the scale of hiring was enlarged and as the process became more complicated, management of the labor of the group fell entirely into the hands of the leader--"boss" he was usually called, but "padrone" by the Italians and the Greeks. Ultimately, he negotiated a single contract for the lot, assuming himself the expense of maintaining them, and retaining for himself a profit from the transaction. Before long, this means of organizing construction labor became so lucrative for the padrone that he turned into a species of subcontractor, built up new gangs on his own initiative, and often also recruited members from his countrymen abroad.[1]

South Florida's Spanish speaking migrants have organized themselves into work groups under the direction of various types of leaders. Such organization is done to efficiently locate work, provide security in case of hardship or emergency, and generally to maximize the self-interest of all involved. It is these diverse worker group types and their leaders which are the major focus of this study. As perhaps with the study of any human behavior, the more closely it is investigated, the more varied and

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[1]Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1951), pp. 69-70.

complex it appears to be. Crew chiefs and workers, patrons and clients, contractors, haulers, growers, and row bosses; all of them form part of a complex pattern of economic and personal organization and interrelationship. These leaders, their worker groups, and the relationships that bind them together, must be sorted out, explained, and analyzed.

Both Florida and Texas agricultural authorities categorize farm workers in two general groups: those called "freewheelers" and the "regulars." These terms, though useful at times, are misleading and inexact; they must be clarified at the onset. Freewheelers are those migrants who associate themselves as little as possible with any established work group, who rarely register with state and local migrant authorities, and who may or may not work repeatedly for the same employer. In a word, freewheelers are those individual workers or small family units who come to Florida alone without having made prior arrangements for employment. Freewheelers come, look for work, stay if they find it, and then move on.

Opposed to freewheelers--at least in the terminology of officialdom--are the "regulars" or "seasoned regulars" as they are sometimes called. To be a regular is to be more closely integrated with work groups, group leaders, local agricultural authorities and specific employers. Typically, "regular" workers will be associated with a crew leader who is registered with the local labor office. Or they will work each year for the same grower with whom prior arrangements for housing and employment have been made.

In reality these two frequently used distinctions, as worker types, do not have much validity. As shall be seen, simplistic typing of workers and supervisors has little validity due to the fact that behavior patterns are so varied. It could be said

that freewheeler and regular behavior traits do exist, but as pure migrant types, they are little more than stereotypes. For example, most Puerto Rican men who come to Dade County arrive individually or in twos and threes, unshepherded by any supervisor. But then the workers go directly to the same employer who has employed them for years, they greet as friends and the worker-supervisor relationship takes up where it left off the year before. Which are these workers, freewheelers or regulars? It is useless to type the worker himself, but rather it is better to analyze the various phases of his employment behavior.

The concept of a patron is a central one to this study. The role of patrons and their relationships will be discussed more fully in the following section. At this point it is felt that the term patron should remain undefined and used as little as possible until the several types of work leaders may be described. Suffice it to say that what is under scrutiny here are the personal and economic motives which unite workers and their overseers. First, an examination will be made of worker behavior and of the roles of supervisors as they have been observed in Dade County. Following this, the observed behavior patterns, roles, and motives for forming various worker-supervisor relationships will be analyzed at some length.

It is common knowledge that migrant workers are organized under the leadership of a crew chief. Be they benefactors to the worker or exploiters of the worker, crew chiefs serve many functions which are necessary for the smooth running of local agriculture. The "classic" crew chief, who someday in the future may become a minor folk hero (or villain), is a Negro work contractor who forms his crews in the deep south states of Georgia, South Carolina and Alabama. Taking advantage of the poverty and ignorance of rural Blacks in these states, he usually fills one or two beat-up old busses with men and women whom he has told of heavy crops and good wages once

they get "on the season." These busses and their cargo can still be found on the back roads of central Florida during the fruit season and occasionally they are to be seen in south Florida. Upon leaving Florida, these crew chiefs and their crews wend their way north as far as upstate New York.

Officials of the Florida Industrial Commission claim that this type of crew activity is decreasing among Negro migrants. It is claimed that it is increasingly difficult to find rural southern Negroes who are willing to join a crew and set out upon the east coast, Florida to New York, migrant odyssey. Black crew leaders and their crews are beyond the major emphasis of this study. Yet these workers and their "classic" form of crew organization, were, and still are an important part of Florida's agricultural scene, hence their existence cannot be entirely passed by. What is of importance here is that Black migrants are slowly fading from the south Florida agricultural picture. Likewise, their manner of crew organization--large groups of workers under the direction of a crew leader who travels with the crew--seems to be disappearing as well.

When one discusses the role of the crew chief with workers, growers, local agricultural officials, and with crew chiefs themselves, the term "crew chief" is always the object of some confusion. The much-used term, crew chief, must therefore be clearly defined at the onset, if the ensuing discussion is to make any sense at all. There are many different men who supervise farm workers; their roles are highly varied and yet they sometimes overlap. The functions of crew chiefs are, at this time, undergoing changes; these changes must be investigated. Let us then investigate the various men who are responsible for the supervision of migrant farm workers; among them we will find crew chiefs.

Migrant Worker Supervisors, Towards a Typology

The relationship between growers and workers is usually an impersonal one. Growers have work to be done periodically during the year and they need groups of workers to do it. At the same time, workers need employment and they actively seek it of the growers. Not only are the language, class, financial, and cultural differences between growers and workers vast, but their interests differ. The orientation of the grower is toward the condition of his crop, current market prices, and the weather; to him, field workers are another commodity or variable which must be dealt with as efficiently and cheaply as possible. The major interest, in simplified terms, of migrant workers is to find the most work and the best wages possible. Between the grower and the worker there exists a gulf of culture and self-interest that is so broad that it must be bridged by an individual, or several individuals, who can deal with both sides of the labor-management fence. These men who serve as intermediaries may serve more closely the interests of growers in some cases, and in others, the interests of workers. Three factors are of importance in determining these types of intermediaties and labor supervisors: 1) the actual function that is performed, 2) where the perceived self-interest of the intermediary lies--with the workers, entirely with himself, or with growers, 3) and the size of the general operation, that is, numbers of workers used and the number of acres to be harvested. For clarity, the types of labor supervisors and intermediaries are outlined in Table 9.

TABLE 9

Labor Supervisors and Intermediaries: A Typology

I Contractors
- A. Growers' Labor Contractors
- B. Independent Labor Contractors

II Crew Chiefs
- A. Small Independent Contractor/Crew Chiefs
- B. Non-Contracting Crew Chiefs

III Haulers or Truckers

IV Family Heads

Contractors

Labor contractors are typified by the fact that they deal directly with growers and make contracts to pick and transport crops. There were two types of contractors observed:

1) Growers' Labor Contractors. A man who is a labor contractor for an individual grower is rather like the labor representative of an industrial firm. He is a year-round employee and often a business partner of the farmer; in fact, in some cases he is a member of the grower's family. It has been observed that only the largest of tomato growers utilize their own labor contractor. The responsibilities of the grower's labor contractor are to oversee the picking and trucking operations during harvest time.

Ordinarily these contractors contact crew chiefs who are in the area and make arrangements for a certain number of men to be in the fields at an appointed time. Needless to say, the interests of these contractors are totally with the farmer; field workers are conceived as a commodity to be acquired as cheaply as possible.

2) Independent Labor Contractors. Independent labor contractors are identified by the fact that, in large scale harvesting situations, they form a liaison

between growers and crew leaders. They negotiate contracts with growers at a price per box rate which is paid for picked tomatoes and vegetables delivered to the packinghouse. In other words, these contractors are responsible for the picking of the crop and hauling it to the packinghouse.

When a price per box rate has been negotiated with the grower, the independent labor contractor then makes subcontracts with various labor suppliers of Dade County. Typically he will seek out Mexican-American crew chiefs who are entrusted by their crews to do the bargaining. The contractor will offer a price per picking bucket as the wage to be paid the crew members. Also a bonus will be paid to the crew chief in one form or another; this bonus is often employment for the crew chief as a row boss at a rather high hourly wage. The same will be done for Negro crews and crew leaders. And in the case of Puerto Rican workers, who often have no crew chief or spokesman, the contractor will go to a Puerto Rican migrant camp and announce that there is work available picking tomatoes and will quote the price per bucket to be paid. If there is general agreement that the work and the wage are desirable, the contractor will send a bus to the Puerto Rican camp the next morning to bring the workers to the field.

Once the field hands are obtained, it is the responsibility of the contractor to transport the harvested crop to the packinghouse loading platform. It is becoming a tendency for independent contractors to own a fleet of flatbed trucks to use for this purpose. If this is the case, the contractor will usually have as part of his staff, three or four men who work as truck drivers. These drivers are often family members who are employed by the contractor all season long and who form part of his work crew. If the contractor does not possess his own trucks, he then must subcontract with a hauler or trucker who specializes in this operation. (Haulers and their specialized functions will be discussed below.)

Due to the number of variables involved, and due to the fact that no two independent contractors operate in the same manner, it is extremely difficult to present a clear picture of the economic workings of the grower-contractor-crew chief-worker relationship. An example which is believed to be "typical" will at least clarify the situation.

When a grower has a section of tomatoes that are sufficiently ripe to be picked as "mature greens" for the northern markets, he makes preparations, providing market prices are suitable, for the harvesting, packing, and shipping of his crop. An arrangement is made with an independent contractor concerning the price of harvesting and delivering the tomatoes. This is done on the basis of the price paid to the contractor for each field box of tomatoes delivered to the door of the packinghouse. Field boxes contain sixty to seventy pounds of tomatoes and measure roughly three feet by two feet by two feet. This past year, the usual price paid by growers was sixty to eighty cents per field box. From this amount contractors have several payments to make. First, the migrant workers who pick the crop must be paid. Tomato pickers use a standard size plastic bucket which contains 5/8 of a bushel. Field workers pick the tomatoes from the vine, put them in the buckets, carry the buckets to the end of the row, and dump them into the field boxes. Two buckets of tomatoes are needed to fill a field box. When he dumps his bucket of tomatoes, the worker is handed a small yellow ticket with the contractor's name stamped on it. These tickets, in other words, the wage for picking 5/8 bushel of tomatoes, are worth from fifteen to twenty-five cents, depending on the agreement previously made between contractor and crew chiefs or the contractor and workers. Thus the picking cost to the contractor is thirty to fifty cents per field box of tomatoes.

Other than picking costs, contractors have several other expenses. Row bosses

or ticketeros who hand out the yellow tickets and inspect the tomatoes are paid $2.00 or $2.50 per hour. If truck drivers and loaders (two per truck) are part of his crew, they are paid about the same wage as row bosses. After these wages are paid, and the costs of gasoline, vehicle insurance and bank payments on trucks are all paid, the remainder is the independent labor contractor's profit.

How much money labor contractors earn during a season is a question that is open to much dispute. Mr. Walter Kates, an official of the Florida Agricultural Employment Department of the Florida Agricultural Employment Department of the Florida Industrial Commission, perhaps answered this question in the most credible terms. He claimed that few independent labor contractors earn "big money," which he defined as $15,000 a year and above. Most, after meeting all of their payrolls and payments, are left with a slim margin of profit. Only four or five of the largest and most efficient labor contractors are taking home large profits; the majority of contractors live between feast and famine depending on the crops, the weather, and the market, just as growers and workers do.

Independent labor contractors are independent small businessmen or professional middlemen. The service that they perform is a valuable one both to growers and to workers. Their occupation requires no small amount of skill and business acumen. As with most businessmen, once their prescribed functions are completed--that is, once they "deliver the goods"--their major responsibility is to themselves. Labor costs to them, as all costs, are expenses which must be kept as low as possible to insure an efficient and profitable operation. Large scale independent labor contractors usually maintain impersonal relationships with the migrant workers they employ. Workers feel no particular allegiance to these contractors and do not look to them for special favors or aid in time of hardship or emergency. Growers and crew leaders maintain some

degree of personal contact with labor contractors, but these are more for the purpose of business expediency than any real personal relationship.

Crew Chiefs

The roles of crew chiefs in Dade County vary so much in functions and in the size of the operation that the term "crew chief" defies neat description. Perhaps the single distinguishing characteristic of a crew leader is that he directly oversees a crew of workers. That is, he has influence over a nuclear crew of anywhere from seven to twenty-five persons who will go to work where and when he tells them to.

1) Small Independent Contractor/Crew Chiefs. These crew chiefs perform most of those functions carried out by the independent labor contractors discussed above. They negotiate a price per box contract with growers and then pay pickers and haulers accordingly. The major difference in this case is that the labor contractor/crew chief operates on a more limited scale so that he does not need to deal with other crew chiefs. Having his own crew, this crew leader utilizes them exclusively to pick and deliver the crops for which he has contracted. Traditionally these crew leaders have worked for medium and small scale growers whose harvests do not call for the use of large numbers of migrant workers. As small growers are disappearing from the Dade County agricultural scene, so are these small scale labor contractors becoming more and more rare.

Most crew chiefs who serve as labor contractors must hire others than the members of their immediate crews. In fact, the concept of a labor crew must be clarified at this point. In the case of all Spanish speaking work crews, it was found that there exist two types of crew members. First, there are nuclear crew members who are usually members of the crew leader's own extended family. Hence, in the case of Mexican-American crew leaders, the members of his nuclear crew are workers upon

whom he can depend to work where and when he wants them to. It was observed that the number of nuclear crew members is usually six to ten; in one case, twenty-three or twenty-four nuclear crew members were mentioned. When the labor contractor/crew chief contracts with a grower to harvest a field, he usually will need many more workers than the members of his nuclear crew.

In this case two sources of labor are usually drawn upon. First, if the crew chief has friends, neighbors, or any other relatives who are not immediately attached to the leader's crew, these people are notified and asked if they need work the following day. If they do need work, they will drive out to the appointed field in their own vehicles the next day and go to work for the crew leader. If more workers are needed, the crew chief will look for those field hands known as "day haulers." In south Dade County several vacant lots or parking lots behind supermarkets have become designated as "day haul points." At these points each morning between six and seven o'clock, five or six dented old busses line up to pick up workers. At the same time, bleary eyed workers, Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans, Negroes and white Anglos appear looking for work. These men and women are day haulers. The busses are either run by crew chiefs and contractors or they are operated by haulers who subcontract their transportation services. As shall be described later, these workers compose one of the major labor sources utilized in south Dade County. Hence if a labor contractor/crew chief needs more workers than his nuclear crew and his personal contacts can provide, he sends a bus to one of the day haul points in order to bring his number of workers up to full strength.

The major function of the contractor/crew chiefs in the eyes of the growers who hire them, is to provide moderate sized work crews for a limited period of time. The work crews usually number from fifteen to forty field hands. The tasks for which they

are hired are usually specific, such as picking a particular field during a one or two day period. A "good" contractor/crew chief in the eyes of most growers is one who can produce the necessary amount of workers at the agreed time. Due to weather, maturation of the crop on the vine, and the fluctuations of the northern markets, the prompt harvesting of a crop is an important matter to farmers. When a grower decides to harvest, it is in his best interest to locate workers, get the crop picked, packed and on its way to the northern markets as quickly as possible. If a contractor/crew chief cannot for some reason muster out a full strength worker crew on the appointed day, he is highly ineffective in the eyes of the grower who has employed him.

The Dade County growers often bemoan the fact that there has been an acute labor shortage during the past several years. In light of the fact that south Dade migrants worked an average of three days a week during the past season, claims of a labor shortage would seem spurious. What is more likely is that during the major part of the tomato and vegetable season, there is an oversupply of migrant workers. But during the three or four optimum harvest periods, when crops, weather, and market prices all dictate that as many tomatoes must be picked as soon as possible, then there is apt to be a true labor shortage, for then every available man, woman, and child is apt to be found in the fields.

Contractor/crew chiefs were observed to be generally young and upwardly mobile. It appeared to be that their nearly universal aspiration is to enlarge their contracting operations and become independent labor contractors. This would then allow them to deal with larger growers, make larger scale contracts, and ultimately would allow them to earn larger profits.

The allegiances of contractor/crew chiefs were observed to be to both growers and to workers. An allegiance to the various growers for whom contractor/crew chiefs

work is quite understandable; it is upon the growers that they depend for a livelihood. Hence the cordiality of their relationship must be maintained. All of the contractor/crew chiefs interviewed in the course of this study spoke of the growers for whom they worked in the most positive of terms, describing them as good and honest men to work for. Indeed, it would have been less than politic to describe them in any other terms when speaking to a casual acquaintance. Likewise it is of value for these contractors, to have a reputation as a "good" crew chief among those migrant workers who compose both his regular crew and those, such as day haulers, who work for him only on a casual basis. Each morning as day haul workers mill around the busses parked at the day haul point, they question the driver, "Who is your crew leader?" or, "What crew chief are you taking us to?" The driver answers, and if that particular crew chief has a poor reputation among the workers, the day haul migrants will not board that bus, unless, of course, there are no others to take. If a crew chief cannot attract field hands to work for him, he is, in essence, a general without an army.

The contractor/crew chief has more personal responsibilities towards the members of his immediate crew. These seven, or ten, or fifteen men and women, and their children, are usually related to him by blood or by compadrazgo, or co-godparentage. Likewise, the members of the crewleader's work crew usually were found to live in close proximity. In all cases observed, the crew chief was the commonly recognized leader of the group, particularly in matters of employment. Likewise, if problems arose that could not be handled by nuclear family group heads--for example if a loan or credit was needed, or an unusual problem were to arise with local law enforcement authorities--usually the crew chief was contacted.

2) Non-Contracting Crew Chiefs. In general terms, non-contracting crew

chiefs, or more simply--crew chiefs, and the labor contractor/crew chiefs described above, differ in only one aspect. Crew chiefs do not make work contracts with growers. Instead they arrange for their crews to work under the auspices of an independent labor contractor. As will be remembered, independent labor contractors usually have no crews of their own; rather they serve as middlemen between growers and crew chiefs. The crew leaders being discussed here are those who are contacted by labor contractors when amassing a work force to harvest a grower's crop.

The crews which crew chiefs supervise vary greatly in size. Once again, the pattern of crews composed of nuclear and secondary or marginal members was observed. Nuclear crew members, as in the case of contractor/crew chiefs, are usually family members, while the marginal members are usually friends of neighbors who respect the fact that the crew leader knows where to find work.

Two of the crew leaders interviewed were Puerto Ricans. In that the great majority of Puerto Rican migrants in Dade County do not travel with their families, family ties did not form such an important part in the organization of worker crews. It was observed in the case of the Puerto Rican crew leaders that their position was largely attributable to natural leadership abilities and skills as an administrator. Puerto Rican migrant workers referred to these crew chiefs as listo or "sharp" operators who could locate work and good pay. They were of the opinion that it paid to know these crew chiefs, and apparently crew leaders were happy to foster this opinion.

Concerning Puerto Rican migrants and crew leaders, some further observations must be made. In Dade County there are instances of what might be called Puerto Rican growers' crews. That is to say, some Puerto Ricans have an arrangement with growers whereby they come directly to that grower from New Jersey, live in his housing arrangements, and work almost exclusively in that grower's employ. This situation

calls for a particularly weak crew leader-worker relationship. Crew chiefs in this case are little more than work overseers who instruct the migrants as to how and where to do the tasks desired by the grower. Also it must be noted in other parts of south Florida--Palm Beach and Broward Counties in particular--Puerto Rican workers were observed during the 1968-1969 season to work and travel in family groups much as the Mexican-Americans do in Dade County.

In general, it was observed that the authority of non-contractor crew chiefs was little respected by local labor contractors. Labor contractors contact crew chiefs because this is an efficient way to gather workers together. Each crew leader contacted is able to bring several workers to the fields. No doubt, the more workers a crew leader can produce, the higher his status with labor contractors. At times some crew chiefs are given special duties while in the fields; they are appointed by labor contractors to serve as row bosses. It is not entirely clear which crew chiefs where chosen to be row bosses or why. It was hinted at by several workers that this is a form of pay-off to crew leaders who have brought large numbers of workers to the fields.

The Mexican-American crew chiefs interviewed all spoke at great length of their responsibilities towards the members of their nuclear crew. This relationship was almost invariably ameliorated by the family ties that bound migrant workers and crew chiefs. By and large, the ordinary type of obligation of this type of crew leader was to make sure that his crew had as much work as possible. In broader terms, it is the crew leader's responsibility to see that all are fed and housed through the season. "Good" crew chiefs were defined by workers as those who could provide as much work as possible. "Good" crew chiefs are those who have contacts and influence with labor contractors and are hence frequently called upon to bring their crews to the fields.

Haulers or Truckers

Haulers or truckeros provide a specialized function of supplying trucks to haul crated tomatoes from the fields to the packinghouse. Little of value was learned of the trucking operations of Dade County's haulers. In the simplest terms, haulers subcontract to labor contractors on a salary or percentage basis to perform their services. This is usually a family operation, done by a small Mexican-American family group composed of a father and several sons. In the cases observed, the family head made the business arrangements with the labor contractor and the sons worked as truck drivers and loaders.

It is not unusual for truckers to also own a bus which is used to pick up day haul workers in the morning and take them to the fields. This service is also commonly performed on a subcontract basis with independent labor contractors. Reports vary as to how haulers are paid for the transportation of workers, but the most reliable sources claim that the contractors pay the bus drivers a flat rate of $10 per day for their services, plus one dollar for each worker they deliver to the fields. Once the bus driver delivers his cargo of workers, he, too, usually works in the fields as a picker, a truck loader, or a row boss.

The functions of haulers, both as transporters of crops and of workers, are specialized ones. Other than truck drivers, truck loaders, and bus drivers, there are few employees involved. Therefore haulers have little need to form many economic or personal relationships for the purpose of running a successful business.

Interestingly enough, it was towards haulers that the greatest amount of animosity was aired by migrant workers who were interviewed for this study. Due to the flat rate that bus operators are paid, plus the dollar a head bonus, it was often expressed by workers that haulers perform a very simple task and are paid exceedingly

well for it. Crew chiefs and contractors were felt to perform valuable functions, while bus operators are simply technicians whose duties are overly lucrative. All of the workers who stated this opinion were day haul workers and the majority were Puerto Ricans. In that day haul workers pay no allegiance to any one crew leader and in that they have daily contact with haulers who have no supervisory authority, it could be guessed that this daily relationship has existed long enough for a backlog of personal conflicts to develop. Also, realizing that most bus operators are Mexican-Americans, it is understandable in the light of the generally poor relationships between Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans that these animosities were bound to have come about.

Family Heads

In Dade County it was observed that none of the Mexican-American migrants who come from Texas travel in a common bus or truck as do Negro migrants from the south. Most Chicanos who come to Florida come here in their family car or pickup truck. This transition to smaller travelling groups has also been noted by the Texas Good Neighbor Commission in their 1968 Report. Although the report concerns migrant farm workers who leave Texas to work in all parts of the United States, the following passage is completely valid when applied to Dade County's Mexican-Americans.

> In recent years we note a change in the group makeup of migrants while in travel; the groups are smaller. There are still organized crews under the direction of a crew leader but few of the large unwieldy groups of the past that traveled in truck convoys or busses. . . . the family automobile is replacing the truck and bus to a great extent.[2]

Upon arriving in south Florida, these small family groups may form a part of a crew leader's crew for the duration of their stay here, or they may work as day haulers.

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[2]Texas Good Neighbor Commission, p. 2.

These Mexican-Americans who drive here as family groups and then work as day haulers are perhaps the only true "freewheelers" in south Dade County. As freewheelers, these small family groups travel and work under the auspices of a male family member, who, for the lack of any better term, will be called a "family head" for the purposes of this study. Family heads, in the case of a nuclear family which travels to Florida, are almost invariably the husband-father. Or, in the case of a couple of families, or an extended family group, the family head is likely to be a natural leader or one who has had much experience as a migrant. Their duties are much as the duties of any family head; they must look out for the overall well being of the group, give aid in emergencies, and make sure that the maximum possible amount of work is found.

Migrant Worker Supervisors, Conclusion

Thus ends an attempted typology of migrant supervisors or overseers, from large scale labor contractors to Mexican-American family heads who are responsible only to their wives and relatives. Hopefully the functions of each type of supervisor and his relationship with his worker constituents have been clarified. These relationships will be further described and analyzed in the following section of this study.

Once again a distinction must be made between supervisor types and supervisor roles. The preceding typology was composed, largely for reasons of clarity, as a listing of supervisor types: contractors, crew chiefs, haulers, etc. First of all, as has been pointed out, these types overlap: family heads and crew leaders, for example, have many common responsibilities towards their constituents. Secondly, during the course of one harvesting season, many individual supervisors transgress the boundaries between supervisor types as defined here. For example, in the case of labor contractor/crew chiefs who negotiate work contracts for their crews with

individual growers, if a contractor/crew leader can find no grower to hire him and his workers, he then will work as a regular crew chief under the direction of a full-time labor contractor. The man has changed roles in the context of the agricultural employment scene, yet he still maintains his crew and his relationship with its members is little changed. During a season, due to the laws of supply and demand, there is much role-changing of this nature; it is part of the expediency of the existence of agricultural migrants. In that the boundaries between supervisor types are easily crossed, it is more realistic to consider an individual and the role he is playing at a particular point in time, rather than inalterably and arbitrarily define him as a "type" as the foregoing typology would imply.

Chapter IV

CULTURE BROKERS, PATRONS AND CLIENTS

Upon reaching this point it is hoped that the reader has been given a clear picture of the three major interest groups which operate in south Dade County's toma to and vegetable production. Chapter One of this study was an attempt to present an overall picture of Dade County's agriculture, but to do so from the point of view of growers and farmers who must deal with the problems of soil conditions, the variations of climate, market conditions, and competition from imported tomatoes. Chapter Two was a presentation of the Spanish speaking migrant farm workers, how many there are, their life styles and migration patterns, and the problems that they encounter. The preceding section, Chapter Three, was an attempted typology, hence description, of those who supervise migrant workers and, in effect, stand between workers and farm owners, fulfilling, in various degrees, responsibilities to both sides. Having presented these three groups, it is now time to investigate the ways in which they relate to one another in the common effort of harvesting and transporting the county's vegetable and tomato crops.

In that the economic interests and the cultures of the local growers and migrant farm workers differ so greatly, a third party must be called upon to serve as an intermediary. The formal and informal functions of this intermediary group, as it relates to the other two groups, will be the focus of this section's discussion. The relationships of the three groups will be analyzed from the standpoint of two established theoretical concepts which have been defined and discussed by social anthropologists. These concepts concern: 1) the role of the "culture broker" as a social intermediary, and 2) patron-client relationships between social unequals.

The rationale for bringing these concepts to bear hopefully will become

increasingly clear as this discussion and analysis develops. In the past it has become an erroneous but common tendency for anthropologists to observe and attempt to understand subcultural groups as isolated entities. Yet it is known that in most cases subcultural groups are related to the overall society in a countless variety of ways; through this relationship political power and patronage, cash and goods or services, and social adaptation are passed from one group to the other. This interchange takes place in Dade County between the overall society, largely represented by the agricultural establishment, and cultural sub-groups, or the Spanish speaking migrants, which are the subject of this study.

The concept of the culture broker is a useful one here, for work supervisors, crew chiefs in particular, clearly fit Eric R. Wolf's description as: "those who stand guard over the critical junctions or synapses of relationships which connect the local system to the larger whole."[1] It is hoped that this concept will help in analyzing the behavior and roles of the group of agricultural middlemen described in Chapter Three of this study.

The concept of the patron-client relationship will also be of value here, for it is through the use of this relationship that the less powerful of a society seek to gain special consideration from the more powerful. These two concepts are clearly interrelated, for one of the major functions of a patron is to serve as a bridge or culture broker between a sub-culture and the national culture.

Culture Brokers

Eric R. Wolf has coined the term "culture broker" and has given it wide

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[1]Eric R. Wolf, "Aspects of Group Relationships in a Complex Society: Mexico," American Anthropologist, Vol. 58, No. 6 (December 1956), p. 1075.

circulation. Robert Redfield has used the word "hinges" to describe those who mediate between the peasant and his Little Tradition and the more powerful elements in the society who partake of the Great Tradition.[2] Others have made use of the terms "gate keepers" and "cultural intermediaties." Using George M. Foster's criteria, it is the function of culture brokers to relate community oriented individuals, or subcultural group members, who want to stabilize or improve their life chances, but who lack the necessary economic or political means, with nation-oriented individuals who operate primarily in terms of the complex cultural forms which serve as national economic and political institutions.[3]

The situation of Dade County's Spanish speaking migrant workers and that of the county's growers and agricultural establishment both very clearly fit into this conceptual framework. The farm workers are members of cultural sub-groups and are alien to the region in terms of language, legal residency, income, connections with the local power structure, and finally, in terms of culture itself. They are aliens whose presence in Dade County is only temporary. Being aliens, or marginal people, migrant workers are powerless and strongly handicapped in relation to local management, local institutions, and with the local culture in general. Conversely, south Dade's growers are clearly bearers of the national "anglo" culture and are members of the local and national power structures which influence and manipulate political, economic and educational institutions. When confronted with the institutions of the dominant society, Spanish speaking migrants are greatly handicapped, they are nearly powerless, and in many cases are incapable of communicating.

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[2]George M. Foster, "What is a Peasant?" in Peasant Society: A Reader, Jack M. Potter et al. (eds) (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1967), p. 8.

[3]Ibid., p. 9.

If it is necessary for the members of marginal subcultural groups to deal with members of the dominant society, and indeed it is necessary, this powerlessness and inability to communicate must somehow be dealt with. There are two ways to do this. Either an intermediary is chosen, or as more frequently occurs, is self-appointed; he negotiates for both parties, bridging the gap between them and thus facilitating their transactions. In that the members of the two groups are of different cultures, the intermediary must possess a sufficient amount of bi-culturism to successfully span the cultural differences. It is only when this factor of cultural difference is present that intermediaries become cultural intermediaries or culture brokers.

The second method of bridging the gap between the two groups, and hence maximizing the interests of the marginal group, is for the marginal group to somehow conduct its dealings from a base of power. Granted that marginality and power are infrequent bedfellows, but if the state of powerlessness of the marginal group can be altered, the nature of the transaction between the two groups will become altered. Labor organization and a de facto right to strike would greatly change the present relationship between the powerful and the powerless.*

Those individuals who serve as culture brokers are not simply "roles" or "functions" or some type of inanimate object. They are people who operate according to their own perceived self-interests. If these self interests are perceived by an individual to include executing the functions of a culture broker, it is well and good for him, for

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*It is realized that even if Spanish speaking farm workers were organized and did deal with farmers from a broadened power base, some sort of a culture broker would still have to be called upon to bridge the existing culture gap. The point here is that the role of the culture broker would change from that of a manipulator and a negotiator, to an interpreter and labor spokesman whose interests would be completely allied with the subcultural group.

culture brokerdom is a path to prosperity and prestige that is travelled only by those who are upwardly socially mobile. Eric Wolf writes of this aspect of culture brokerage in the clearest terms of all:

> An individual who seeks power and recognition outside his local community must shape his behaviour to fit these new expectations. He must learn to operate in an arena of continuously changing friendships and alliances, which form and dissolve with the appearance and disappearance of new economic or political opportunities. In other words he must learn to function in terms which characterize any complex stratified society in which individuals can improve their status through the judicious manipulation of social ties. However, this manipulative behaviour is always patterned culturally--and patterned differently in Mexico than in the United States or India. He must therefore learn the cultural forms in which this manipulative behaviour is couched. Individuals who are able to operate both in terms of community-oriented and nation-oriented expectations then tend to be selected out for mobility. They become the economic and political "brokers" of nation-community relations, a function which carries its own rewards.[4]

Those who serve as culture brokers in Dade County are all "worker supervisors" as discussed in the preceding chapter. If the role of the culture broker is defined as mediation in economic, organizational, cultural, and other terms between members of the dominant culture and those of a sub-culture, it must be said that in Dade County this role is a diffuse one, usually performed by several intermediaries, rather than a single culture broker.

Norman R. Kurtz, in an article which appeared in Rural Sociology in 1968, has attempted to analyze this role of "gate keepers" whom he partially defines as "concerned persons in strategic positions for providing ready access to resources needed to solve problems."[5] Kurtz' most interesting finding was that his gatekeepers (who

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[4]Eric R. Wolf, pp. 1071-1072.

[5]Norman R. Kurtz, "Gatekeepers, Agents in Acculturation," Rural Sociology, Vol. 33, No. 1 (March, 1968), p. 65.

served as a form of culture broker between the Mexican-American and anglo communities in Denver, Colorado) were themselves interrelated and arranged in "clusters" or "cliques." These cliques of culture brokers carried out the functions of cultural mediators as a group by frequently calling upon one another's varied resources. In general terms this is the case among the culture broker/work supervisors of Dade County.

However, the term "cliques" of culture brokers is not applicable in this context, for the term implies a social cohesion and a pattern of personal friendships which was not observed in South Dade. But, with a few exceptions, culture brokerage in the situation being studied appears to involve a chain of intermediaries, rather than a single "hinge," between the two cultural groups.

Remembering the foregoing typology of worker supervisors, let us return to them and view them in the light of the culture broker concept.

1) Labor Contractors. South Dade County's independent labor contractors were observed to carry out some functions of culture brokerage, but their role mainly seems to be that of a labor broker or negotiator while culture brokerage is secondary to their purely economic and organizational functions.

Labor contractors' dealings are usually limited to those with growers on one side and with crew chiefs on the other. The Florida Industrial Commission estimates that fifty or sixty percent of all labor contractors and crew leaders are Mexican-Americans. Hence if a labor contractor is a Mexican-American, he will usually carry out his dealings with Mexican-American crew chiefs. Since the labor contractor serves an intermediary function between anglo growers and Mexican-American crew chiefs, it could be said that he is a culture broker. But defining contractors as culture brokers in this instance has a limited validity, for the crew chiefs with whom he deals

are by and large acculturated English speakers who are in need of a broker in business terms, but who could easily exist without a broker of the cultural idiom. It is only when bicultural labor contractors deal with anglo growers on one side and with unacculturated Spanish speaking crew leaders on the other, that they are serving as "classic" culture brokers as well as labor brokers. Although no figures are available, this is assumed to be a rare and somewhat unlikely instance.

Hence the definition of culture broker behavior in this case becomes a moot point and leads to speculation and musings. In that there are certainly varying degrees of acculturation, there must exist varying degrees of culture brokerdom. In the case of labor contractors whose intermediary activities are largely of a business and organizational nature rather than a cultural one, are these men still acting as culture brokers?

This writer would reply affirmatively, for remembering Wolf's definition cited earlier, it would appear that labor contractors have been extremely effective in relating themselves to the "complex cultural forms" and "national economic institutions" of the dominant anglo society. But in doing so, perhaps for the sake of efficiency, contractors have depersonalized their dealings with members of their own sub-group by placing yet another set of intermediaries between themselves and those who do the actual field labor. The more one observes the activities of Dade County's work supervisors/culture brokers, the clearer it becomes that the concept of culture brokerage must undergo several refinements in order to be of help in understanding local labor-management relationships. Perhaps it is best to here propose some of these refinements and then develop them as this discussion continues.

When the definitions of the culture broker concept which have been posed by established anthropologists are applied to the specifics of the Dade County situation,

it becomes clear that there are at least two types of culture brokers.

a. There are "classic" or "pure" culture brokers who stand squarely between two cultural idioms and link them together. Such is the case with labor contractors who deal with anglo growers and unacculturated crew chiefs. However a stance equidistant between the two cultural and interest groups seems more theoretical than real.

b. This leads us to a second type of culture broker, that which will be called the "representative" culture broker. Representative culture brokers are those persons who have formed relationships within either the dominant cultural group or the subcultural group and in doing so have allied their interests with that group. When an individual uses these relationships and alliances to link the two groups together, serving as a grower's representative or as a labor representative rather than as a true middleman, he is then performing as a representative culture broker.

2) Crew Chiefs. As previously discussed, there are two types of crew chiefs, or crew chief activity, in existence in Dade County. All crew leaders manage their own crews, but some negotiate directly with growers while others carry out their dealings with labor contractors. Those crew chiefs who negotiate directly with farmers and directly with their crew members are perhaps the best examples of classic culture brokers in Dade County. From the aspect of economics and organization they serve as the only mediators between management and labor. Likewise, as cultural intermediaries, contractor/crew leaders serve as the only "hinge" between anglo growers and Mexican-American or Puerto Rican farm workers. In that the majority of workers are not bi-cultural, the services of this type of crew leader are necessary to both sides.

Crew chiefs who deal with labor contractors rather than with growers do serve as culture brokers, but not as clearly and directly as the others. In all cases observed and reported, Mexican-American crew leaders and labor contractors were bilingual. When negotiations are made between labor and management, they are usually carried out through the channel of grower-labor:contractor-crew:leader-worker. In this case the tasks of culture brokerage fall upon a two-link set of intermediaries--the labor contractor and the crew leader. The culture broker role is divided between the businessman and manipulator, the contractor, whose interests are linked with those of the grower, and the crew chief who serves somewhat as a labor representative selling his crew's labor and his own managerial skills. Usually there is little negotiation done between contractors and crew leaders; the contractor ordinarily offers a per bucket wage plus a bonus for the crew chief; then the conditions are either accepted or rejected.*

While contractors are more closely allied with growers, crew leaders' interests are aligned with those of migrant workers. A contractor's usefulness, power, and money-making ability are rooted in his capability to deal with growers. The usefulness of crew leaders lies in their ability to relate to farm workers, to bring specified numbers of workers to the field, and to manage them efficiently.**

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*Perhaps this is due to the chronic oversupply of labor in Dade County. It is not known if, during the three or four harvesting peaks each season, when there is an undersupply of workers, negotiations between contractors and crew chiefs are modified by the altered balance between labor supply demand.

**The relationship between contractors and crew chiefs has some importance for both. Contractors who are disliked and avoided by crew chiefs are nearly useless. In part the success of a good contractor depends upon being on cordial terms with the local crew chiefs and having a reputation as a fair and honest employer. But the real hallmark of successful contractors is their ability to deal with, and get labor contracts from growers.

The relationship between crew leaders and crew members is a crucial one for the success of the crew leader and ultimately for the success of the crew. As previously discussed, there are two types of crew members: permanent, or nuclear, crew members, and those who can be called upon on an irregular basis. Between Mexican-American crew leaders and nuclear crew members, family ties were observed to be extremely important. Almost without exception, the members of Mexican-American nuclear crews were found to be related to one another by blood, marriage, or compadrazgo. This conclusion was not drawn from any metric evidence, and perhaps is one of the major shortcomings of this study. But in every case where crew leaders were interviewed and were asked to name those people who worked as season-long crew members, those named, or the nuclear crew members, turned out to be the crew chief's own children, aunts, uncles, in-laws, brothers, cousins, and co-godparents. The economic and familial relationships between crew leaders and nuclear crew members were found to be further cemented by a series of informal reciprocal obligations which will be further discussed later in this chapter.

The relationship between crew leaders and non-nuclear crew members is a more distant one in terms of interdependency and in terms of the culture broker functions performed. Two types of non-nuclear crew members are sought out when a crew leader must temporarily enlarge his crew. Through personal contacts, friends and neighbors, people are found who are willing to work with the nuclear crew for a specified amount of time. Also, day haul workers are picked up by a bus driver at one of the day haul points.

In the case of the workers who are personal contacts, we see another of the functions of a culture broker. He acts not only as a "gatekeeper" between the dominant culture and the sub-cultural group, but he must exercise an influence upon

members of the sub-cultural group. Arnold Strickon in writing of owner-worker relationships in the Argentine pampas, states that the intermediary's influence is ". . . difficult to establish and depends upon his ability to tap into the kin and neighborhood systems which order criollo* relationships in the countryside."[6] The influence of the culture broker, or crew chief in this case, is called upon to induce sub-cultural group members (migrant workers) to act in a manner which is beneficial to all parties involved; that is, turn out to work under his leadership. Since one of the measures of an effective crew chief, in the eyes of growers and contractors, is the amount of workers he can produce, usually on short notice, it is imperative that he cultivate and maintain his contacts, his influence, and his reputation within the migrant community.

The relationship between crew chiefs and day haul workers is by and large an impersonal one. As previously described, crew chiefs simply send a bus to bring day haulers to the field and then supervise them while they work. In terms of the functions served in this case, it can be said that here, too, crew chiefs serve as culture brokers for they bring to bear their knowledge of and their good reputation with members of both cultures. In doing so, the way is cleared for the exchange of services for wages. In reality this function is similar to that performed for the nuclear crew members, but in this case the relationship is marked by an almost totally impersonal contact between the culture broker and members of the sub-cultural group.

There is a great deal of similarity in the way Puerto Rican crew chiefs serve as culture brokers. If a Puerto Rican crew chief negotiates harvesting contracts with

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*The term criollo is here intended to mean a campesino or a rural person.

[6]Arnold Strickon, "Carlos Felipe: Kinsman, Client, and Friend," Abstract of a paper presented to the American Anthropological Association (mimeographed), New Orleans: November 1969.

growers, he calls upon two factors: his bi-culturality and a harmonious relationship with the farmer. Among Puerto Rican crew members, except for an occasional set of brothers, family ties play almost no role at all. The leadership of crew chiefs is based upon three factors: 1) being directly commissioned by a farmer to manage a crew while working in the farmer's fields and living in his housing facilities, or 2) by having contacts which will provide employment for the crew, and 3) by all of those personality traits which determine a leader among Puerto Rican migrant workers. Puerto Rican crew leaders generally function as culture brokers much as Mexican-American crew leaders do. They are invariably bilingual and are "urbanized" in their manner of speech, their dress, and their bearing. One Puerto Rican crew chief expressed his concept of his role in terms that are so lucid that they bear repeating:

> Finding work here is very complicated. There are many growers, many fields, and many different wages. Also there are many who will take advantage of workers if theycan. Most workers don't know how to find work and yet what they want most is to get out and pick as much as possible. My job is to go out and find work for my boys (crew); most of them don't even speak English. I know where to look and who to talk to. At the same time, the growers and contractors need someone like me to bring men to the fields.[7]

3) Family Heads. The recognized heads of extended families perform some of the functions of a culture broker, but on a very limited and personal basis. Usually the male who acts as family head speaks English, while others in the family may speak little or none at all. Hence, by virtue of the fact that he is often called upon as a spokesman and interpreter, the family head constantly performs some functions of a culture broker.

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[7]Interview with Juan Trevino, Princeton, Florida, 17 January 1970.

Family heads also assume a large part of the responsibility for finding work. In concrete terms this means that family heads must either associate themselves with a crew chief who is then vested with this responsibility, or that the family must be brought to an area where there is a sufficient amount of day haul work. This requires a good deal of shopping around in order to find where and at what time there will be work available. Except for occasional visits to the Farm Labor Employment Office in Princeton, the act of job hunting is conducted through informal contacts within the migrant community.

Although the role performed by most family heads does not entirely fit within any definition of a culture broker thus far discussed, the role unquestionably does include bits of culture broker behavior. For example, informal but important culture broker type functions are performed by family heads who go to the local school to enroll the family's children, help someone deal with the police, or in any way aid family members in their dealings with local bureaucracies and institutions. These certainly are the functions of a cultural intermediary, but here the functions are performed only to deal with specific, family related problems. Within the work situation, family heads serve as economic and employment brokers, but it is not usual that they serve as brokers between the two cultures. However, they do serve as links to the actual culture brokers, the crew leaders and labor contractors. Remembering the concepts of "classic" and "representative" culture brokers discussed above, it could be said that family heads are extreme examples of representative culture brokers; their role is much more that of a representative than a broker.

Culture Brokers in Dade County, Some Conclusions

Culture brokers, or cultural intermediaries as described by Foster, Redfield, Wolf, Kenny, and Kurtz, are definitely in evidence in the agricultural employment

practices of Dade County's Spanish speaking migrants. The culture broker's role as economic, organizational, personal, and cultural intermediary between Mexican-American or Puerto Rican migrants and anglo growers or local anglo institutions is an important and necessary one to the members of both cultures.

The workings of the local culture brokerage practices call for some further observations and refinements upon existing material concerning culture brokers which has been set forth by modern anthropology.

First, in this case, culture brokerage was found to be shared by several individuals. In that cultural and employment mediation calls for intermediaries who are more committed to one side than the other, the actual mechanics of culture brokerage are set in motion when these intermediaries come together. Hence, when labor contractors who have contacts with anglo growers deal with crew chiefs whose constituency is among Mexican-American workers, culture brokerage is carried out, but by two--rather than one--intermediaries. This fact has called for a tentative breakdown of the culture broker role into "classic" and "representative" culture brokers. As has hopefully been made clear above, the majority of culture broker activity is carried out in Dade County by a two person system, composed of labor contractors and crew chiefs, which gives representation to anglo management and Spanish speaking labor interests. The concept of culture brokerage has herein been further expanded or refined to include some of the functions of family heads who represent extended family groups to the two person culture broker system, and who mediate for family members when confronted by problems with local authorities or institutions.

Secondly, it was found that the previously described intermediaries serve their own self interests in functioning as labor supervisors and culture brokers. Due to a lack of organization and cohesion, the work supervisors described cannot yet be called an

interest group; perhaps they will become one with the passage of time. Since taking up the role of crew chief or labor contractor is a recognized step towards social mobility, it would follow that there is some mobility up the hierarchy from family head to crew leader to labor contractor. In other words, the culture broker/work supervisors discussed are both upwardly mobile and independent operators. Hence it is unwise for the outside observer of the local agricultural scene to assume that these culture brokers are at all times benefactors or even true representatives of the rank and file of farm workers.

Patron-Client Relationships

Patron-client relationships are a familiar and well established form of social contact throughout most of Latin America. The Spanish word patron has several related meanings: an employer of workers, a ceremonial sponsor, a skipper of a small boat, the protecting saint of all people who bear his (or her) name.[8] In all cases, a patron is someone who possesses power, status, influence, and authority. George M. Foster describes patrons as ". . . powerful people who may be city dwellers, wealthy hacienda owners, religious leaders, or other individuals with the ability to give aid."[9]

In an investigation of the use of the title don* by Chicanos in a south Texas community, Octavio Ignacio Romano V. lists the local patrones as the owner of the town's only factory, certain wealthy businessmen, the Mexican consul, and individuals

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[8]George M. Foster, "The Dyadic Contract: A Model for the Social Structure of a Mexican Peasant Village," in Peasant Society, Jack M. Potter, et al. (eds.), (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1967), p. 222.

[9]George M. Foster, "What is a Peasant"? in Peasant Society: A Reader, p. 9.

*Don is an informal title of respect affixed before an individual's first name, e.g. Don Julio, Don Juan.

in relatively high political office.[10]

He who serves as a patron is always of a significantly high rank in his community. From this status stems the power which permits him to be a patron. But a person, no matter how powerful or influential, is a patron only in relation to someone of a lesser position. The lower status person--the client--is helped and protected in specific circumstances by the patron. A personal relationship between the two provides reciprocal benefits to both patron and client, a "dyadic contract" in Foster's words. The low status partner in the relationship stands to gain the most self-evident benefits: "Lacking effective political control and knowing it, peasants** seek structural devices which permit them to maximize--the word seems hardly suitable--their pathetically meager opportunities, and almost always on an individual, or at most, on a family basis."[11] The benefits which clients derive from this relationship are usually received in the form of aid or protection during crisis periods. These benefits may be: aid during illness, emergency loans, help in legal disputes or in dealings with

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[10]Octavio Ignacio Ramano V., "Donship in a Mexican-American Community in Texas," American Anthropologist, Vol. 62, No. 6 (December, 1960), p. 967.

**It is tempting to take up the issue of whether or not to define migrant farm workers as peasants. As the title of Foster's article implies, the term itself is open to several varied definitions. This matter lies beyond the scope of this study, but one worth mentioning perhaps as the object of further research. This writer believes that migrants are peasants, perhaps an unconventional peasant type, but nonetheless, peasants. Harry A. Landsberger in the introductory chapter of Latin American Peasant Movements (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1969), defines peasants by four criteria: 1) peasants are rural cultivators who live and work close to the land, 2) they have a dual oreintation to family and to market, 3) peasants share the norms and institutions of a community, 4) they are subordinate in a hierarchical economic and political order. These criteria roughly apply to south Florida's migrant workers; obviously their degree of applicability can be debated, but limitations of space unfortunately deny further discussion of the point.

[11]George M. Foster, "What is a Peasant?", p. 8.

government officials, protection against various forms of exploitation, and advice on the wisdom of contemplated decisions.

Patron-client relationships are based upon exchanges between the two parties, but these exchanges are asymmetrical in nature, for it is the patron who has the greater access to goods and services and is thus able to give more. The gains received by patrons are not as easily defined. A feeling and a public appearance of magnanimity perhaps play some part in the rewards reaped by patrons. It is defined as "good" in most societies to be generous and noble in one's dealings with the less fortunate; this image is a becoming one to individuals of wealth and influence. This relationship is also characterized by domination and control by the patron. With the establishment of a patron-client relationship, an undetermined amount of allegiance is owed to the patron. This debt may be drawn upon at any time, and clients may be called upon to work for, to fight for, or to vote for the patron, depending upon the patron's power base and role in the community.

How both parties enter into a patron-client relationship, and how that relationship becomes established and almost contractual, is a slow, complicated, and varied process. In the briefest of terms, the relationship is begun and strengthened by a continual and slowly escalating exchange of goods and services. At no time is a balance struck; favors are never completely paid off on either side, for to do so would cancel out the relationship. Exploiting the compadrazgo system is one of the obvious and most used ways of entering into and consolidating patron-client relationships.

Hopefully the concept of patron-client relationships herein has been defined and made clear. Let us now turn to the specific case of migrant workers in Dade County and explore how, and where, patron-client relationships exist.

It must be stated at the onset that patron-client relationships, somewhat

surprisingly, were found to exist in a much lesser degree than had been anticipated. Many instances of patronage or benefactor-like behavior were observed and reported, but clear-cut, long term patron-client relationships were largely absent. Let us briefly review south Dade's agricultural scene and hopefully more will be understood about patron-client relationships and why they are notably absent here.

1) Growers. Surprisingly enough, the most clear-cut example of a patron-client relationship was observed between a south Dade tomato growing family and a Puerto Rican crew chief. The client, named Romulo Lopez, has been a crew leader since 1959 and a camp manager for the John W. Campbell Company since the mid-sixties. John W. Campbell and his family operate one of the most successful tomato firms in south Dade County. Successful as it is, the company is still very much a family operation, and thus some of its dealings with labor representatives have been personalized.

Romulo Lopez first came to Florida in the early 1950s as a migrant worker. At that time Campbell's camp was mainly filled with Puerto Rican men, and through the course of several years, Lopez has become a leader among them. Since those who lived in the Campbell camp spent most of the season working in Campbell's fields, the Mexican-American pattern of independent crews and crew chiefs was not yet in evidence. Lopez through his growing influence with the men in the camp became more and more frequently contacted by the grower and his agents in order to represent the workers, carry out supervisory tasks, and help to solve problems. By 1959, Lopez states that he was a crew leader, and Campbell and other growers contacted him when men were to be sent out to the fields. His responsibilities as a crew chief include getting the men together to go out to work and supervising them when in the field. His role

has never been tonegotiate wages between the workers and Campbell, for when Puerto Rican migrants come to live at the camp, they agree to work for Campbell if he has any work. If not, the migrants then seek out day haul work or temporary work with another crew chief. Since Campbell pays wages that are on a par with other growers, Lopez claims, wage negotiation has never been an issue.

During the sixties, the ethnic composition of the camp greatly changed. Today it houses an estimated one hundred Mexican-American families and only fifty or sixty single Puerto Rican men. Lopez is still the recognized leader of the Puerto Ricans, but the Mexican-Americans deal with Campbell through their own leaders. In 1966 Lopez was given the job of camp manager, which makes him responsible for the general well being of the camp. Although he goes to the fields to supervise during the planting and harvesting seasons, Lopez no longer migrates, he remains in his own rent-free house within the camp with his wife and three children. In doing so, he serves as a year-round watchman and handy man.

Romulo Lopez has entered into a cross-cultural patron-client relationship with John W. Campbell and his family. Through the years he has been granted many considerations by the Campbells: a better house, the suspension of rent payments; a loan to fly back to Puerto Rico to see his dying father; Campbell's co-signature for the credit purchase of a car; and Lopez' caretaker job itself. Conversely, Lopez claims that he has been a good and responsible worker for the Campbell company; he has worked for the company for a long period of time and, generally speaking, he feels that his best interests lie with those of the John W. Campbell Company. He has mentioned several specific cases where he believes that he demonstrates his allegiance to the company: he feels it his duty to prevent damages to the camp's buildings by workers, he urges Puerto Rican workers to turn out to harvest, even when they are hungover on

a Monday morning, and he maintains contacts with workers so that they come back to Campbell each season.

The exchange of compadrazgo or co-godparentage ties never has taken place in this relationship between the Campbell organization and Romulo Lopez. Yet the relationship is clearly that of a patron and client; the status differences between the two parties, the long duration of the relationship, and the exchange of specific favors and aid for allegiance and willingness to work in the patron's best interests make this a nearly classic case of a patron-client relationship.

In this case, there are two variations from the descriptions of patron-client relationships that were presented above. First of all, the patron is not a single person, but rather is a small family which has divided managerial duties among itself. Also the patrons are not of the client's sub-culture, they are members of the dominant overall culture. Secondly, the client is no simple peasant; he is a sophisticated and socially mobile individual who is serving as a culture broker and is utilizing a patron-client relationship to further his interests as a culture broker. However, these two factors do not alter the fact that this is a patron-client relationship; they do portray some local variations of a predefined social practice.

In this case, the benefits gained by the patron, even though he must dispense aid and favors to the client, are made considerably more evident. During the course of interviewing Lopez, this writer questioned him concerning ways to alleviate the problems suffered by migrants. One point brought up was the possible unionization of farm labor in order to possibly better workers' living and working conditions. Lopez replied, "There has been a lot of talk about forming a union, but I think that this is only talk. First of all, migrants can't be organized because they have too many different opinions and they move around too much. Also if workers formed a union, they'd

want higher pay, and farmers can't afford to pay higher wages, so they'd probably have to go out of business and then everyone would be out of work. No, unions aren't the answer at all."

It is not known how frequently growers enter into a patron-client relationship. Lopez himself claimed that while other growers and supervisory personnel have good working relationships, his was an unusually close one with the Campbell family. The writer's investigations bear this out, for there were no other cases of such a relationship observed or reported in Dade County.

2) Labor Contractors. Among Mexican-American labor contractors, no cases of patron-client relationships were observed. It was claimed by contractors and crew leaders who were interviewed, that they had never seen a patron-client relationship develop between a grower and a contractor or between a contractor and a crew chief. A relationship of this nature is alien to the functions served by most labor contractors. The existence, and the work patterns of labor contractors are characterized by an independence from and impersonal relationships with both growers and crew chiefs. Impersonal relationships, although effective for business purposes, are not conducive to the establishment of patron-client relationships.

3) Crew Leaders. To deal with crew leaders in terms of the patron-client relationship, the concept must be further discussed and perhaps modified. As will be remembered, patrons were defined to be powerful people who are always of a significantly higher rank. In no way could crew chief be said to fit this description, although they may possess a little more power or rank than an ordinary farm worker. Nevertheless crew chiefs were observed to behave as patrons in many instances. Thus the question arises: can a true patron-client relationship exist when there are but

slight status differences between patron and client?

Mexican-American crew chiefs have several responsibilities to their crew members besides finding them a place to work and supervising them in the fields. When Mexican-American migrants were questioned as to what they could ask of their crew leaders other than locating work, they replied: Help in finding housing, emergency transportation, intercession or advice when dealing with local authorities, and an occasional loan when emergencies arise. Other than loaning money, which is done rarely, crew chiefs are called upon to give aid that costs nothing. Instead, they are called upon to give emergency aid or to act as an intermediary or interpreter when dealing with local schools, police, medical authorities, or the local court system.

It must be remembered that most Mexican-American nuclear crews are made up of family members. Hence most of these benefits which are bestowed upon crew members by crew leaders are favors done within an extended family. This brings to light another question: can patron-client relationships exist between family members?

In return for these occasional favors granted, it could be claimed that crew members repay their crew chiefs in an allegiance which is manifested by always being willing to work for him. This point is a highly debatable one, for it is the major function of crew leaders to make work available; migrants will not base their allegiance to a crew chief on gratitude for small favors granted--rather allegiance is based upon the crew chief's ability to find employment for his crew. This brings us to the only logical conclusion that can be drawn; crew chiefs and their crew members do not usually subscribe to what could be called mutual patron-client relationships, unless one were willing to radically alter the definition of that relationship. As has been pointed out, the relationship between crew chiefs and crew members is: 1) shared by individuals who are more or less social equals, 2) is ordinarily a relationship between members of an

extended family, 3) is typified by a very limited exchange of benefits, benefits which are best characterized as favors granted due to group or family loyalty.

These three factors have led to the conclusion that Mexican-American crew chiefs and their crews are not bound by a relationship that can be termed a patron-client relationship. An exchange of favors and social cohesion are a common characteristic of Mexican-American crews, but this cohesiveness is based on family ties, a common need for employment, and a common exchange of favors that may be found in many groups of people who work and live together. Those benefits granted by crew chiefs largely fall in the realm of services rendered by a representative culture broker to the members of that sub-cultural group which he represents.

4) Family Heads. For the same reason that crew chiefs cannot be defined as patrons, family heads can likewise be said not to perform the functions of a patron. The relationship between family heads and the members of an extended family is cemented mainly by family ties and by occasional culture broker services performed by the family head.

Culture Brokers and Patron-Client Relationships, Some Conclusions

The concepts of the social roles of culture brokers and patron-client relationships have been of use, and hopefully of interest, in gaining some understanding of Spanish speaking migrants in south Florida. Hopefully, these two concepts have given some insights into the sets of relationships which bind migrant workers and local growers together in the pursuit of their own self interests.

Culture brokers, as has been pointed out, are the chief mediators between the separate interests and cultures of agricultural management and labor. Culture brokerage as a concept, and culture brokers as self interested intermediaries are extremely cogent

and applicable to the south Dade agricultural scene. Obviously this study has not been exhaustive in its description or its analysis of culture brokers; many questions remain unanswered or even unasked.

The concept of patron-client relationships is an interesting and useful one when applied to the study of many Spanish speaking peasant groups. At the onset of this study, patron-client relationships were to be one of the major thrusts of investigation; it is ironic that later observation and analysis has repeatedly made clear the lack of actual patron-client relationships existent in the Dade County agricultural milieu. The concept still retains a good deal of its value in a negative sense, for a further understanding of migrant existence and migrant social relationships was gained while making the realization that patron-client relationships are largely absent. Conversely, a further understanding of the patron-client relationship was gained as patron-client type behavior was observed, analyzed, and finally judged not to conform to the established definitions.

The question remains as to why there is such a marked absence of patron-client relationships. Several likely reasons exist--all of which probably lend themselves to this absence in varying degrees. First of all, among the Spanish speaking migrant community there are no established persons of power and influence who could serve as patrons. The south Dade migrant population is a mainly single-class group; all migrants are workers, except for a few upwardly mobile technicians who serve as culture brokers. Secondly, except for rare cases, anglo growers, who do possess power and influence, are not prone to entering into patron-client relationships; the concept is largely alien to their cultural idiom. Thirdly, the heavy Mexican-American farm labor influx is a recent phenomenon which began only in the early sixties. Patron-client relationships need time and stability to form and grow; at this point there has not been sufficient

time. Fourth, by the very fact that migrants travel, and do so in small groups, much of the stability that is necessary for the existence of patron-client relationships is lacking. And finally, remembering that most Mexican-Americans have retained deep roots in south Texas, the following statement by Nancie S. Gonzalez, a social anthropologist, is very significant.

> The important point is that the migrant's experiences take on meaning primarily in relation to his own village or the sociocultural system in which he was born and brought up. Margaret Mead in regard to Manus points out that, "Away from the home they (i.e. the migrant workers) were essentially in custody of some individual enterprise. . . . Their social or ethnic identity, remained tied firmly to their own village."[12]

It would appear that south Dade's Mexican-American migrants, if they have any patrons, have left them at home.

Finally, this absence of patron-client relationships is fitting in the context of the general conditions under which south Florida's Spanish speaking migrants live and work. As employees they are without the benefit of retirement funds or workmen's compensation; as citizens they are without a local vote; as a labor group they lack organization; as culture bearers they are beyond the local linguistic and cultural pale, and as Spanish speaking peasants they are unequipped with one of the few social relationships which they might exploit to maximize their self interests. Spanish speaking migrants in south Florida are the clients of no one.

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[12]Nancie S. Gonzalez, "Family Organization in Five Types of Migratory Wage Labor," American Anthropologist, Vol. 63, No. 6 (December, 1961), p. 1267.

EPILOGUE

It is hoped that at this juncture the reader has been given a clear and orderly view of at least a part of the south Dade County agricultural situation. Hopefully, an understanding has been imparted of the existence and the interrelationship of those who work, those who manage, and those who supervise and mediate in the combined effort to produce the yearly vegetable and tomato crops. All of the pertinent information has been presented and several conclusions have been tentatively and somewhat gingerly drawn. At this point the writer would like to present some further conclusions which are largely based upon the observations and research which have formed a part of this study. They cannot be presented as "scholarly" or "scientific" findings which are based upon empirical research or are given the academic authority of footnotes. However, the following conclusions are based on observations made during a year and a half of association with and study of Spanish speaking migrants. Consequently, it is felt that they are worth adding to the foregoing study.

In the course of doing the research for this study, one of the most striking observations that was made was that something is rotten with the state of south Dade's agricultural sector. In talking with people involved with all facets of the county's agricultural production, one is repeatedly struck by the general state of malaise which affects growers, agricultural agents, labor contractors, crew chiefs, and workers. Each interest group is openly alienated from the other; growers from workers, workers from growers, while the intermediaries attempt a middle stance, but an uneasy one nevertheless.

The future is almost invariably predicted in grim terms and fear of the future is a common state of mind. Growers fear their demise due to rising competition from

Mexican tomatoes; they fear further profit loss dictated by the chain store controlled marketplace; and they fear rising labor costs which they claim they cannot pay. Migrant workers are pessimistic and resigned in their outlook; they fear a constant oversupply of labor and an undersupply of work to be done. They likewise fear the advent of mechanized harvesting or the complete demise of the local tomato business. They foresee a future of negligible wage increases while the cost of living markedly rises. And finally they face a future which they, nor their children, will have almost no part in shaping.

In terms of income, no one appears to be happy. Few growers are getting rich and many smaller growers are being forced out of business. Workers, as has been previously stated, worked on an average of three days a week during the past season. Their work is dull, back-breaking, and dangerous, their living conditions are often degrading, and their take home pay is a pittance. Likewise, few work supervisors are becoming rich, and they too are resigned to the fact that their fates are dictated by uncontrollable vagaries of the agricultural marketplace, imported produce, and the weather.

Against this background of pessimism, alienation, and poverty, Mexican-American workers and their family groups have somehow been able to maintain what might be called a "functional" existence. They have maintained family cohesion, they are not generally involved in anti-social acts, and they are still willing to work hard and long for their meager incomes. Perhaps this functional existence is based upon the fact that Mexican-Americans live, travel and work as family groups, and hence their apparent strength is a product of family cohesion in the face of hardship. This functional existence that Mexican-Americans have managed to maintain is the only edifying and hopeful bit of human behavior that this writer was able to observe in

the entire south Dade County agricultural scene.

In spite of the functional living patterns of Mexican-Americans, migrant farm workers in general are exploited and colonized human beings. Agricultural production and economics are characterized by mutual exploitation in our society: food stores exploit both farmers and consumers; farmers exploit migrant workers. Competitive production dictates that everyone in the production chain exploit and be exploited in order to turn a profit. The margin between being exploited and exploiting someone else is called efficiency; efficiency determines profits. But the case of the farm worker is different; he cannot turn around and exploit someone else in order to control his margin of profit. The migrant farm worker is the last and the lowest man on the entire production chain; there is nowhere he can turn to maximize his profits. The proofs of the existence of this exploitation, and the measure of its degree, are the ugly realities of low wages, poor housing, substandard health care, lack of education, and even a shorter life expectancy.

What is worse is that migrants are virtually helpless in the face of this exploitation. Migrants are handicapped by a lack of mastery of the Anglo cultural idiom, a lack of job skills, a lack of education, and a lack of that particular orientation that allows one to think and act within the dialetic of "the maximization of profit margins" as discussed above. They are migrant farm workers not because they love to travel or because they love the great outdoors; they are migrant farm workers because they have to be--there is no other employment available. In the writer's opinion, this constitutes the state of being of a colonized individual or group; the alternatives open to the colonized are limited to the utmost: either accept the society's basest work at its lowest wages. . . or starve. Those who work as migrants are powerless to modify the alternatives, and for that reason they return, year after year, as migrants. So will their

children, until the logic of the growers' efficiency dictates that they are no longer needed. If any would still deny that this colonized status exists, he has but to look at the long history of periodic social outrage over migrant conditions, and then he must look to the cold fact that our government and our society have never produced reforms that will significantly alter this state of affairs.*

If migrant farm workers are exploited and colonized, who then are the colonizers and the exploiters? Too often, farm owners alone have been cast in this role. Thye are easily identifiable villains, if one is seeking villains, but this is a simplistic and short-sighted answer. In this writer's opinion, the fault lies at the roots of the economic and social organization of our society. Free economic competition and legalized exploitation, in short, the profit motive, are the economic roots of the migrant problem.

The social base of the problem is closely tied to the existence of a class structured society which openly with-holds education, housing, health care, and social mobility from the low status members of the society. Obviously, then, in a class structured and a profit motivated society, someone or some groups must always be at the bottom of the class system, and someone or some groups must always be a relatively poor competitor for the limited profits that the economic system has to offer. It is always the poor competitor and low status group that is the exploited and the colonized In a society which openly sanctions and lauds the practices of exploitation of

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*As these pages are being written (July, 1970), the periodic yelp of social outrage is being heard again. NBC News has aired its hour-long White Paper Report, titled Migrant, which concerns the condition of Florida migrants. NBC's finding: ten years after the production of Edward R. Morrow's now-classic CBS Report, Harvest of Shame, migrant conditions have changed not at all. The retort of Governor Claude Kirk, Senator Edward Gurney, and state Agriculture Commissioner Doyle Connor: (in chorus) "Another example of biased and negative news reporting by network television."

colonization while affixing them with more socially palatable titles. One cannot but help wondering if it is by coincidence or not that the colonized and the exploited have almost invariably been the non-Caucasian members of our society. South Dade's migrant workers, it will be remembered, are more than 85% non-white peoples.

Studies such as this one are traditionally closed by a list of suggested reforms which will alleviate the problem areas which have been discussed. Typically, the suggested reforms call for the institution of new programs which will help solve the health problem, the education problem, the housing problem, or whatever other problem might have been unearthed. Yet we have repeatedly seen that these programs are not benignly given by our government or the society; in fact, they are rarely granted. And when reformist programs are instituted, they rarely are of much aid to anyone other than the administrators of those programs. In this writer's view, it would be highly cynical or naive to blithely suggest further programs or reforms. The only totally honest suggestion which can be made is for a total and radical transformation of the social and economic structures of our society. If ever the situation of exploited and colonized groups is to be unequivocally altered, the institutions and the value systems which maintain economic competition and a class structured society will have to be dismantled and replaced by newer and more humanitarian institutions and values.

It is beyond the scope of this study to suggest a plan of action that would bring about the changes which have been deemed necessary. The task appears to be even more hopeless in rural south Florida where radical change or even liberal reform have and will encounter notably infertile ground.

> The explosion will not happen today. It is too soon . . . or too late.
>
> -Franz Fanon
> Black Skin White Mask

The only limited action which could be presently taken to bring about a real change would be for south Florida's migrant workers to organize themselves into a labor union. Through organization and the resulting abilities to bargain collectively and to strike, would come those factors that migrant workers lack desperately: power, unity and leadership. Unity and leadership would result from the struggle for unionization; the power to demand full employment, better wages, better working conditions, and those "fringe benefits" granted to other workers would only come with the formation of a successful union. The call to begin the struggle for unionization is not one to be sounded lightly. Yet--realizing that union movements and unions have greatly aided other worker groups and realizing the impoverished conditions under which most migrants presently live and work--unionization is a struggle and a risk well worth taking up.

Needless to say, there are drawbacks to this course of action. The United Farmworkers strike and boycott led by Cesar Chavez has clearly pointed out that the organization of farm workers is no simple task. In Chavez' case, workers themselves have resisted the union, hundreds more have been jobless for periods of months at a time, isolated cases of violence have occurred, and growers have resisted with a tenacity which had not been anticipated. Yet if the present situation of farm workers is as desperate to warrant a struggle for unionization even with its attendant hardships, there are benefits to be gained. Looking again at the Chavez movement, it must be said that the successes of the movement far outweigh its shortcomings. A large percentage of the farm workers have been organized, growers are signing contracts with the union at an increased rate, the California farm worker has gotten nationwide attention and support, and, most important, the workers involved in the union have become politicized, educated, and self confident in the process; hence a core of leadership

which will continue and broaden the efforts of the United Farmworkers.

Henry A. Landsberger, in a recently published anthology titled Latin American Peasant Movements, has set forth a set of hypotheses concerning the ways in which peasant movements are initiated and develop. Two of Landsberger's hypotheses are directly applicable to what has happened in Delano, California and what could happen in Dade County, Florida.

> Hypothesis IX. Individuals and groups likely to participate in peasant organizations are those whose traditional values have been modified through education or through such circumstances as participation in military service, entry into the economic market, or closeness to towns and general accessibility to communications and transportation.[1]

To draw direct parallels between Latin American peasants and Spanish speaking migrant workers is tenuous, but similarities do exist, and most migrants in south Florida can be described as having modified their traditional values through travel and entry into the economic market.

> Hypothesis X. The establishment of a peasant organization will be made easier by any experience peasants might have had in community life and work settings and in the performance of organizational functions and roles, such as cooperative planning and dividing responsibility.[2]

That experience which Landsberger claims will make the establishment of a peasant organization easier is best gained through the organizational process itself. The organizing of migrant workers is a process which calls for and develops skills in leadership, administration, cooperative planning and the division of responsibility. In other words, the most effective way to train personnel for the process of labor organization

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[1]Henry A. Lansberger, "The Role of Peasant Movements and Revolts in Development," in Latin American Peasant Movements (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1969), p. 41.

[2]Ibid., p. 43.

is to begin the process at once; in doing so, most farm workers will be exposed to more practical education than they have ever encountered in their few years of formal schooling.

The point can be, and has been, raised that Florida's farmworkers are not ready for unionization and that they are not particularly desirous of it. In a sense this is true: most migrants are not burning with the need to organize. In fact, most are openly sceptical of the idea because any union movement 1) seems impossible and 2) it would threaten the little job security that migrants now have. Two alternatives present themselves: one would be to do nothing until farmworkers somehow decide they would profit from unionization; the other would be to initiate a vanguard unionization movement at once, and in doing so politicize, educate and involve an ever-broadening sector of the rank and file migrant farm workers.

Fidel Castro, a recognized expert in the initiation of vanguard movements, has identified the above alternatives and in very clear terms has expressed the need for immediate action:

> There are those who believe that it is necessary for ideas to triumph among the greater part of the masses before initiating action, and there are others who understand that action is one of the most efficient instruments for bringing about the triumph of ideas among the masses. Whoever hesitates while waiting for ideas to triumph among the masses before initiating revolutionary action will never be a revolutionary.[3]

The future appears to hold three alternative courses of events for migrant farm workers. One of these is that little will change in the future, as little has changed in the past, until one day farm workers will be phased out by more "efficient"

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[3]Speech delivered by Comandante Fidel Castro Ruz at the closing of the First Conference of the Latin American Organization of Solidarity (OLAS), 10 August 1967.

machines. Another alternative is that migrant workers will organize themselves and form a power base from which they will further their interests and deal with future problems, even those of mechanization. The third alternative is that through a complex series of fundamental changes in our society, the practices of exploitation and colonization of the society's members will not be sanctioned or tolerated. In the context of the present state of migrant farm workers and of the general society, the second and third alternatives are paths of revolutionary action. It is high time to take these two paths and follow them to the point beyond the horizon where they converge.

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VITA

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During 1965 he lived in Mexico where he worked as an excavator in archaeological diggings at Isla Cozumel in the Mexican territory of Quintana Roo. From 1966 through 1968 he lived in Caracas, Venezuela while working as a community organizer with the residents of Caracas' hillside barrios or squatter communities. In September of 1968 he entered the Graduate School of the University of Miami and began studies toward a Master of Arts degree in Inter-American Affairs at the University's Center of Advanced International Studies. He was granted the degree of Master of Arts in August, 1970.

Mr. Ferster has worked as a social worker, deckhand on a commercial fishing vessel, research associate, construction worker, and as a graduate assistant. He has travelled extensively in South and Central America and the Caribbean; during the spring of 1970 he spent a month in Cuba's Oriente Province.

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